

DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

■ Definition of Developmental Delay under IDEA

A child with a disability for children aged three through nine (or any subset of that age range, including ages three through five), may...include a child (1) who is experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and (2) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related service. 34 CRF§300.8(b)

This category is used for those children ages three through nine. On or before the child's ninth birthday, a disability category must be determined for the child (see §300.8(c)(1)-(13) for disability categories) if the child still qualifies for special education services.

KEY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for special education services under the category of Developmental Delay, a child must be functioning 1.5 standard deviations (25%) below the mean in two domains (physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, or adaptive), or 2.0 standard deviations (50%) below the mean in one domain.

PREVALENCE

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the prevalence of developmental disabilities was 17.1% in studies conducted in 2006-2008.

POSSIBLE CAUSES

According to the Centers of Disease Control, most developmental disabilities begin before a baby is born, but some can happen after birth because of injury, infection, or other factors.

Most developmental disabilities are thought to be caused by a complex mix of factors. These factors include genetics; parental health and behaviors (such as smoking and drinking) during pregnancy; complications during birth; infections the mother might have during pregnancy or the baby might have very early in life; and exposure of the mother or child to high levels of environmental toxins, such as lead.

POSSIBLE SIGNS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The child is not meeting developmental milestones in:

- Adaptive or self-help skills, such as eating/drinking and dressing self, keeping up with school supplies.
- Personal-social skills, such as playing with other children or expressing emotions.
- Communication, such as talking with others, understanding others, or speaking clearly.
- Physical skills, such as running, walking, coloring, and writing.
- Cognitive skills, such as knowing colors, shapes, numbers, and letters.

TEACHING TIPS/INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

- Read aloud often. Children love to hear familiar stories repeatedly.
- Extend and/or expand the child's attempts at communication. For example: if the child says "car!" your response might be: "Yes! That's a red car. The red car is shiny. It is going fast." Or for an older child that may have articulation disorder, proper modeling of the correct pronunciation.
- Encourage independence by allowing them to complete tasks themselves.
- Provide frequent activity changes/breaks for sensory needs.
- Use multiple modalities when teaching.
- Be patient.
- Communicate with the family about their child.

RESOURCES

- **Centers for Disease Control**
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html>
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening.html>
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/features/birthdefects-dd-keyfindings.html>
- **National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities**
<http://nichcy.org/disability/specific/dd>
- **Council for Exceptional Children**
www.cec.sped.org
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children**
<http://naeyc.org>
- **Oklahoma Family Network**
<http://oklahomafamilynetwork.org>