ESE Program Information Sheet - Emotional or Behavioral Disability (E/BD)

Definition: A student with an emotional/behavioral disability has persistent (is not sufficiently responsive to implemented evidence based interventions) and consistent emotional or behavioral responses that adversely affect performance in the educational environment that cannot be attributed to age, culture, gender, or ethnicity.
The corresponding definition is found in State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03016, F.A.C.

Overview: Including a student with emotional or behavioral problems may seem very scary to teachers. Like all disabilities, there is a range of severity. Below are some of the characteristics you may see in students with an emotional or behavioral disability.

- Aggression or self-injurious behavior such as acting out or fighting
- Short attention spans and/or impulsiveness
- Difficulties with learning
- Emotional immaturity demonstrated by temper tantrums and/or inappropriate crying
- Withdrawal and/or signs of anxiety or fear
- Severe mood swings

Of course many students who do not have E/BD may display some of these same behaviors. However, when children have an emotional disturbance, these behaviors continue over long periods of time.

Laws and Regulations: The rule referenced below is specific to E/BD. Please refer to Volume I-B: Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules, Excerpts Related to Exceptional Student Education (PDF, 9MB) for a complete listing of laws and regulations applicable to exceptional student education.
6A-6.03016, F.A.C.: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities

General Resources: The following Resources will provide educators with information concerning Students who have an Emotional or Behavioral Disability.

- Technical Assistance Paper K12: 2008-53 – Guidelines for Implementation of the Revised Rule for Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Emotional/ Behavioral Disabilities (PDF)
- Technical Assistance Paper FY 1999-3: Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavioral Intervention Plans (PDF, 53KB

Websites

- [Baker Act Online Training](#)

National Resources:

- [Office of Special Education Programs - Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)](#)
- [The Association for Positive Behavior Support (APBS)](#)
- [The IRIS Center](#)
- [Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide](#) (PDF)
- [National Center Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC)](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)](#)
  - [Suicide Prevention](#)
- [National Mental Health Information Center – Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)](#)
- [National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP)](#)
- [Reducing Problem Behaviors in the Elementary School Classroom](#) (PDF)
- [United States Department of Health and Human Services – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)](#)
- [What Works Clearinghouse](#)

Tips to support inclusion: Although knowing the general characteristics of E/BD is helpful, teaching strategies for students with E/BD still need to be individualized. It is important for teachers to realize the wide range of abilities and characteristics students with E/BD may exhibit.

- Have a specific "cool down" zone that the student can go to when they feel overwhelmed. Try not to limit the use of the area, but also do not let it become an escape from work.
- Create a silent signal that you can use if you see that the student may need to take a break for a few minutes. Don't "call the student out" in front of peers.
- Use frequent rewards/acknowledgements for appropriate behavior.
- If the student has a specific mental health diagnosis, learn more about it.
- Encourage the other students in your class to accept the student and encourage the student to interact and participate in class discussions and activities
- Set clear behavioral expectations and consequences
- Use peer modeling when appropriate
- Consider implementing a behavior contract with the student.
- Explicitly teach social skills using a variety of modalities.
- Prepare the student in advance for situations that they may see as unfair. Explain the rational to the student.
- Remain calm but firm during difficult times.