



## **ESE Program Information Sheet - Orthopedically Impaired**

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**Definition:** Orthopedic Impairment (O.I.) means a severe skeletal, muscular, or neuromuscular impairment. The term includes impairments resulting from congenital anomalies (e.g. including but not limited to skeletal deformity or spina bifida), and impairments resulting from other causes (e.g., including but not limited to cerebral palsy, fractures, or amputations). This definition is found in State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.030151, F.A.C.

**Overview:** The category of O.I. covers a wide variety of disorders and can be divided into three main areas: neuromotor impairments, degenerative diseases, and musculoskeletal disorders. The impact on learning of a student with O.I. is dependent on the severity of the disease or disorder. Students with O.I. receive exceptional education services when their orthopedic impairment or physical disability adversely affects the student's performance in the educational environment including difficulties with ambulation, hand movement, coordination, or daily living needs and skills. Students with O.I. generally need physical accommodations to support ambulatory needs or other assistive technology to support their participation and inclusion in their educational environment. Students with O.I. may also receive physical therapy, occupational therapy, or speech-language therapy services. The causes of O.I. vary and students may experience pain and discomfort or have additional health impairments due to the disorder. Some disorders also progress the debilitation of the student which may compound the needs of the student both academically and emotionally.

**State Laws and Regulations:** The rules referenced below are specific to supporting students who are Orthopedically Impaired.). . 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-6.030151, F.A.C.: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students With Orthopedic Impairment](#)

**General Resources:** The following Resources will provide educators with information concerning students who are Orthopedically Impaired.

- [Technical Assistance Paper DPS 2010-164a – Guidelines for School Districts on the Use of Service Animals for Students With Disabilities](#) (PDF)
- [Technical Assistance Paper FY 2001-13 – Transportation and Students with Disabilities](#) (
- [Council for Exceptional Education - Physical Disabilities](#)
- [Disability.gov - Physical Disabilities and Mobility Impairments](#)
- [National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities \(NICHY\) - Specific Disabilities](#)
- [National Association of Special Education Teachers \(NASSET\) - Orthopedic Impairments](#)

- [National Center on Physical Activity and Disabilities \(NCPAD\)](#)

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

- Use seating arrangements that support access for the students to be fully included in instruction and with peers
- Incorporate learning objectives that promote development of gross and fine motor skills
- Learn and be aware of the medical condition and its impact on the student in the learning environment both academically and emotionally
- Collaborate with therapists for student to receive services within instructional environment as much as is possible
- Include opportunities for student to participate/respond if assistive technology or augmentative communication devices are needed for the student
- Include technology usage such as speech recognition software, screen reading software, or other academic software or programs for all students
- Support the use of specialized equipment such as specialized chairs, desks, and tables for proper body positioning and support.
- Adapt and modify lessons to meet students' specific O.I. needs ie. Provide graphic organizers, record lessons/instruction,