

PURPOSE

This funding provides for programs that meet the special education needs of students with severe disabilities.

CONDITIONS

1. Eligibility for severe disability funding will be based on a jurisdiction profile but **all** of the following requirements will need to be maintained and in place at the school level:

REVISED

- a) an assessment by qualified personnel for programming purposes
- b) documentation/assessments of the student's current level of functioning in the learning environment
- c) a current Individualized Program Plan (IPP) which addresses the student's diagnosed needs
- d) the levels of support and services being provided to the student

School jurisdictions will use the following categories/codes and related definitions/criteria to determine a student's disabling condition for severe disabilities funding identification purposes:

➡ SEVERE MENTAL DISABILITY (Code 41)

A student with a severe mental disability is one who:

- a) has severe delays in all or most areas of development
- b) frequently has other disabilities including physical, sensory, medical and/or behavioural
- c) requires constant assistance and/or supervision in all areas of functioning including daily living skills and may require assistive technology
- d) should have a standardized assessment which indicates functioning in the severe to profound range (standardized score of 30 ± 5 or less). Functional assessments by a qualified professional will also be considered in cases where the disabilities of the child preclude standard assessments; and/or
- e) has scores equivalent to the severe to profound levels on an adaptive behaviour scale (e.g., American Association on Mental Deficiency Adaptive Behaviour scale, Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales)

➡ SEVERE EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIOURAL DISABILITY (Code 42)

A student with a severe emotional/behavioural disorder is one who:

- a) displays chronic, extreme and pervasive behaviours which require close and constant adult supervision, high levels of structure, and other intensive support services in order to function in an educational setting. The behaviours significantly interfere with both the learning and safety of the student and other students.

CONDITIONS (CONTD.)

- b) has a diagnosis of psychosis including schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, obsessive/compulsive disorders, or severe chronic clinical depression
- c) displays self-stimulation, self-abusive or aphasic behaviour

or

- d) is dangerously aggressive, destructive, and has violent and impulsive behaviours toward self and/or others such as Conduct Disorder. In the most extreme and pervasive instances, severe Oppositional Defiant Disorder may qualify.

A clinical diagnosis within the last 2 years by a psychiatrist, chartered psychologist or a developmental pediatrician is required, in addition to extensive documentation of the nature, frequency and severity of the disorder by school authorities. The effects of the disability on the student's functioning in an education setting should be described. An ongoing treatment plan/behaviour plan should be available and efforts should be made to ensure that the student has access to appropriate mental health and therapeutic services.

A clinical diagnosis of a behavioural disorder is not necessarily sufficient to qualify under this category. Some diagnoses not sufficiently severe enough to qualify include: attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), attention deficit disorder (ADD).

Note: Students diagnosed with FAE/FAS in the most severe cases should be reported under Code 44 rather than Code 42.

➡ SEVERE MULTIPLE DISABILITY (Code 43)

A student with multiple disabilities is one who:

- a) has two or more non-associated moderate to severe mental and/or physical disabilities which, in combination result in the student functioning at a severe to profound level; and
- b) requires special programs, resources and/or therapeutic services.

Students with a severe disability and another associated disability should be identified under the category of the primary severe disability.

A student with a severe mental disability and another associated disability is not designated under this category, but is designated under severe mental disability.

A student with a severe emotional/behavioural disability and another associated disability is not designated under this category, but is designated under severe emotional/ behavioural disability.

CONDITIONS (CONTD.)

The following mild/moderate disabilities cannot be used in combination with other disabilities to qualify under Code 43:

- a) Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)
- b) Learning Disability (LD)
- c) Emotional Behavioural Disabilities
- d) Speech and Language Related Disabilities

➡ SEVERE PHYSICAL OR MEDICAL DISABILITY - including Autism (Code 44)

A student with a severe physical, medical or neurological disability is one who:

- a) has a medical diagnosis of a physical disability, specific neurological disorder or medical condition which creates a significant impact on the student's ability to function in the school environment (note: some physical or medical disabilities have little or no impact upon the student's ability to function in the school environment)
- b) requires extensive personal assistance and modifications to the learning environment in order to benefit from schooling.

A student with severe autism or other severe pervasive developmental disorder is included in this category. A clinical diagnosis by a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, chartered psychologist, or medical professional specializing in the field of autism is required. A clinical diagnosis of autism is not necessarily sufficient to qualify under this category. Eligibility is determined by the functioning level of the student with autism.

In order for a diagnosis of autism to be made, the student needs to demonstrate difficulties in three broad areas:

- a) social interaction;
- b) communication; and
- c) stereotyped pattern of behaviour (i.e. hand flapping, body rocking, echolalia, insistence on sameness and resistance to change).

A student diagnosed with severe Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) or Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE), including Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND), is included in this category. A clinical diagnosis by a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist with specialized training, or medical professional specializing in developmental disorders is required. A clinical diagnosis of FAS/FAE is not necessarily sufficient to qualify under this category. Eligibility is determined by the functioning level of the student with FAS/FAE. Students with severe FAS/FAE exhibit significant impairment in many of the following areas: social functioning, life skills, behaviour, learning, attention and concentration, resulting in the need for extensive intervention and support.

CONDITIONS (CONTD.)**➡ DEAFNESS** (Code 45)

A student with a profound hearing loss is one who:

- a) has a hearing loss of 71 decibels (dB) or more unaided in the better ear over the normal speech range (500 and 4000 hertz (Hz)) which interferes with the use of oral language as the primary form of communication

or

- b) has a cochlear implant preceded by a 71 dB hearing loss unaided in the better ear; and
- c) requires extensive modifications and specialized educational supports
- d) has a diagnosis by a clinical or educational audiologist. New approvals require an audiogram within the past 3 years.

If a student has a severe to profound sensori-neural hearing loss that has not changed significantly, documentation from a qualified specialist in the field of deafness outlining the severity of the hearing loss and modifications to the learning environment may be sufficient to support eligibility.

➡ BLINDNESS (Code 46)

A student with severe vision impairment is one who:

- a) has corrected vision so limited that it is inadequate for most or all instructional situations, and information must be presented through other means
- b) has a visual acuity ranging from 6/60 (20/200) in the better eye after correction, to having no usable vision or field of vision reduced to an angle of 20 degrees

If a student has a severe to profound visual impairment that has not changed significantly, documentation from a qualified specialist in the field of vision outlining the severity of the disability and modifications to the learning environment may be sufficient to support eligibility.

For those students who may be difficult to assess (e.g. cortical blindness – developmentally delayed), a functional visual assessment by a qualified specialist in the field of vision or a medical professional may be sufficient to support eligibility.

2. Funding will be provided to **school jurisdictions** based on an established profile of the jurisdiction that includes historical data of the numbers of students with severe disabilities, patterns of overall student enrolment growth and projections for growth of the numbers of students with severe disabilities, if applicable.

NEW

CONDITIONS (CONTD.)

Profiles will be reviewed if there are significant increases or decreases to the overall student enrolment or number of students with severe disabilities identified to Alberta Learning and funding will be adjusted accordingly. The Special Programs Branch will monitor the number of students reported and may initiate a review of the profile.

For those jurisdictions whose profile changes significantly, valid assessments or medical documentation which confirm the disabling conditions for all students with severe disabilities reported, must be made available to the Special Programs Branch on request.

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Funded students with severe disabilities** included in the profile must receive three or more of the following levels of support:

- a) frequent specialized one-on-one instruction/intervention (e.g., teaching assistant time);
- b) specialized or adaptive equipment;
- c) assistance for basic care (e.g., toileting, grooming, catheterization);
- d) frequent documented monitoring of medical and/or behaviour status; and,
- e) direct therapeutic service at cost to the system (e.g., behaviour specialist, orientation and mobility specialist).

2. **School jurisdictions** must develop and implement an **Individualized Program Plan (IPP)** supported by appropriate medical, psychiatric, psychological or other professional documentation for each **funded student with a severe disability** identified and attending a **school** of the jurisdiction.

Alberta Learning will continue to monitor student's IPPs and supports and services provided.

3. **School jurisdictions** must continue to report students with severe disabilities as of September 30, to Learning Information Exchange Services by October 4. To facilitate the monitoring process, **school jurisdictions** must also send a copy of the information to the Special Programs Branch by October 4.

4. Students who are registered with a **school authority** on September 30 and are approved as having a severe disability, who then move to another **school authority** during the school year, are included in the jurisdiction profile and are not eligible for additional funding. This would also apply to students who move from an institution (such as a hospital program, young offender centre, etc) or from out of province to a **school authority**.

5. **School jurisdictions** are required to report expenditures for students with severe disabilities.

REFERENCES

2001-2002 Handbook for the Identification and Review of Students with Severe Disabilities

