

FACT SHEET

Code 6 Emotionally Disturbed

My child is eligible for Special Education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. His I.E.P. states--Code 6 "Emotionally Disturbed". What does this mean?

According to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) the student who has an emotional handicap exhibits one or more of the following characteristics, over a long period of time, to the extent that he or she is unable to take advantage of or participate in the regular education program:

- * inability to learn cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- * Demonstrates inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances.
- * General mood is one of unhappiness or depression.
- * Tendency to develop physical symptoms, pain, or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- * Unable to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peer or teacher.
- * Demonstrates a variety of excessive behaviors, ranging from hyperactive and aggressive responses to severe depression and withdrawal.

The 1997 Amendments to IDEA do not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance. Many times conduct disorder falls into this category. Autism and ADD are addressed elsewhere in IDEA.

Educational Considerations

School districts are responsible for determining whether a child needs special education and related services as a result of having an emotional or behavioral disorder or mental illness. Children who come to school with significant emotional problems may be so distracted by these issues that they cannot participate in regular activities without assistance. Without specialized help to manage their behaviors or emotions , many children are unable to benefit from their educational program.

The 1977 Amendments to IDEA are explicit in what they require of an IEP team addressing behavioral problems of children with disabilities:

- * The team should explore the need for strategies and support systems to address any behavior that may impede the learning of the child with the disability or the learning of his or her peers.*
- * States shall address the needs of in-service and pre-service personnel (including professionals and paraprofessionals who provide special education, general education, related services, or early intervention services) as they relate to developing and implementing positive intervention strategies.*

Intervention plans emphasizing skills students need in order to behave in a more appropriate manner, or plans providing motivation to conform to required standards, will be more effective than plans that simply serve to control behavior. These plans should include positive strategies, program or curricular modifications, and supplementary aids and support to address the behaviors in question.

For more information on Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans, write The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1000 Thomas Jefferson St., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20007.

RESOURCES

- *Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health
10632 Little Patuxent Pkwy, suite 119
Columbia, Md. 21044
410.730.8267
Toll free: 1.888.607.3637
Web: www.mdcoalition.org
- *Federation Of Families for Children's Mental Health
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.684.7710
- *Families Involved Together
2219 Maryland Ave.
Baltimore, Md. 21218
419.235.5222
- *The Parent's Place of Maryland
7484 Candlewood Road, Suite S
Hanover, Md., 21076
410.859.5300