



Free Special Education Resources, Consultation, Trainings Your Arizona Parent School Connection

Other Health Impairments

What are Other Health Impairments?

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-761(19) state: “‘Other health impairments’ means limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, due to chronic or acute health problems which adversely affect a pupil’s educational performance.”

Additionally, in the implementing regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA ‘04), §300.8 (c) (9), states that “...the limited alertness with respect to the educational environment...”

(i) “is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia; and

(ii) adversely affects a child’s educational performance.”

Other Health Impairment (OHI) refers to a variety of health problems that dictate the need for special education services. In addition to the health problems noted above, OHI may also include convulsive disorders, cystic fibrosis, Tourette Syndrome, AIDS, asthma, cancer, neurological disorders or any other chronic or acute health problem provided that the student’s educational performance is adversely affected.

A child may be determined to be eligible under the category of OHI if a health problem, such as those listed above, limits the student’s strength, vitality or alertness; adversely affects the student’s educational development; limits the amount of time or days that a student can attend class; and the student needs special education and related services in order to make educational progress.

Assistive technology (AT) services should be considered during the comprehensive evaluation

process. A child with OHI may benefit from environmental or curriculum modifications, low tech and/or high tech assistive devices.

How Common are Other Health Impairments?

In the 2006–07 school year, 5,997 students in Arizona were classified as having “other health impairments” and received special education services. This number represents 0.54% of the 1,112,610 students enrolled in Arizona public schools as of October 1, 2006 and accounts for 4.8% of the total special education population.

What Effect Do Other Health Impairments Have on a Child?

Some children have no restrictions on what they can do and learn. Others may require individualized educational assistance and ongoing medical care. Without needed supports and services, children with OHI may be significantly limited in their ability to participate and gain educational benefit. Some children can be too weak to attend school regularly or lack the energy to remain in class long enough to learn. Some illnesses or medications can affect a child’s attention and mood, making it difficult for the child to concentrate.

Other children may be considered chronically ill, but do not need special education or related services. If a child with a health problem is not eligible for special education and related services under IDEA ‘04, he/she may still qualify as having a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If the child does not qualify under Section 504, the parents may request that the child be considered for eligibility under the district’s policies for pupils with chronic health problems under ARS §15-346. The chronic health form ensures amongst other things that the student cannot be expelled

due to excessive absences, which may relate to the student's chronic health issues.

Resources

Books for Children

Carter, A.R. (1996). *I'm tougher than asthma*. Chicago, IL: AlberWhitman & Co.

Dennis, A. & Buttner, T. (1998). *Taming the diabetes dragon*. Valley Park, MO: JayJo Books.

Smith, M. (1997). *Pay attention, Slosh*. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.

Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation. (2003). *The storm in my brain: Kids and mood disorders*. Chicago, IL: Author.

Books for Adults

Michael R. Berren, Ph.D. (2004). *A sourcebook for families coping with mental illness*. New York, NY: McMurry Publishing Company.

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2004). *ADHD: A complete and authoritative guide*. Elk Grove Village, IL: Authors.

Organizations/Hotlines/Web Sites

American Diabetes Association of Arizona, 8125 N. 23rd Ave., Suite 222, Phoenix, AZ 85021-4961, 602-995-4731, 800-342-2383, www.diabetes.org/home.jsp

American Heart Association, 5325 E. Pima Street, Tucson, AZ 85712, 520-795-1403, www.americanheart.org

Arizona Asthma and Allergy Institute, 5605 W. Eugie Ave, Suite 200, Glendale, AZ 85304, 602-843-2991, www.aafa.org

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, 3800 N. Central Ave., Suite 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012, 602-224-0068, www.cff.org

Easter Seals of Arizona, 800-626-6061, www.easter-seals.org

Emily Center, Phoenix Children's Hospital, 1919 E. Thomas Road, Phoenix, AZ 85016, 602-546-1400, www.phoenixchildrens.com/illnesses

Epilepsy Foundation of Arizona, P.O. Box 25084 Phoenix, AZ 85002, 602-406-3581, 888- 768-2690 www.epilepsyfoundation.org/arizona

March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, 1616 E. School Rd., Suite 200, Phoenix, AZ 85016, 602-26 Indian 6-9933; 7290 E. Broadway, Suite G2, Tucson, AZ 85710, 520-298-5490, www.modimes.org

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY), 800-695-0285, www.nichcy.org

Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs, 150 N. 18th Avenue, Suite 330, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-1001, www.azdhs.gov/phs/ocshcn/index.htm

Parent Information Network, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, 2384 Steves Blvd., Flagstaff, AZ 86004, 928-679-8102, 800-352-4558, www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals

Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona, 2600 N. Wyatt, Tucson, AZ 85712, 520-324-3150, 877-365-7220, www.pilotparents.org

Raising Special Kids, 2400 N. Central Ave, Suite 200, Phoenix, AZ 85004, 602-242-4366, 800-237-3007, www.raisingpecialkids.org

Tourette Syndrome Association, 3400 E. Speedway, Suite 118-94, Tucson, AZ 85716, 520-620-2288, www.tsa-usa.org

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