

Statewide P/HD Educational Community of Practice

The statewide P/HD CoP is an organization of Physical/Health Disabilities teachers who provide services to students identified under the special education category of Physically Impaired (PI). P/HD teachers may also provide consultation to teams that serve students with chronic health disabilities (OHD) or traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

Professional Resources

To view or download the State PI Resource manual, resource materials, P/HD list serv information or professional development opportunities, visit the Minnesota Low Incidence Projects website at:
www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/pi.html

The content of this brochure does not necessarily represent the policy of the federal Department of Education or the state Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the federal or state government. Funding for this brochure is made possible with a grant from MN Department of Education. The source of the funds is federal award Special Education – Program to States, CFDA 84.027A

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The local/regional P/HD specialist for your area is:

Meeting the Needs of Students with Physical Impairments



School Services and Supports



Website: www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/pi.html

Serving Students with Physical Impairments

A physical impairment (PI) is a medically diagnosed chronic physical condition, either congenital or acquired, that may adversely affect physical or academic functioning and result in the need for special education and related services (Minn. R. 3525.1337, subp 1). Medical conditions commonly identified as physical impairments include cerebral palsy, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, osteogenesis imperfecta, and arthrogryposis. There is great variability among physical disabilities and related educational needs for support, ranging from very mild to severe. Educational needs can be addressed with customized equipment, technology, and/or specialized instruction.

Most students who meet criteria for Physically Impaired (PI) have difficulty with completion of tasks involving motor skills. In addition, many students have accompanying neurological impairments which may impact organization and independent work skills. Any of these characteristics can impair a student's ability to manage or complete the motor components of classroom tasks within the same time as peers. It is not unusual for students who have physical impairments to have academic needs that result in atypical learning profiles.

Common Educational Needs and Supports

Some common school supports for a student with a physical impairment include:

- Instructional strategies for organization, attention, memory, and time management
- Preferential seating and locker assignment
- Time extensions for assignment completion and tests
- Modification to materials and assignments
- Assistive technology and adaptive equipment
- Text books offered in multiple formats/copies
- Copies of teacher or peer notes
- Additional time for transitions
- Specialized transportation
- Environmental access
- Emergency evacuation options
- Post-secondary transition planning

It is important that students identified with physical impairments be provided access to the same educational experiences and opportunities for success as peers.



PI Eligibility Criteria

The IEP team shall determine that a student is eligible for and in need of special education instruction if the student meets the following criteria:

There must be documentation of a medically diagnosed physical impairment. The student's:

- Need for special education and service is supported by a lack of functional level in organizational or independent work skills; or
- Need for special education instruction and service is supported by an inability to manage or complete motoric portions of classroom tasks within time constraints; or
- Physical impairment interferes with educational performance

P/HD Teachers

The Physical/Health Disabilities (P/HD) teacher participates in evaluations for students with physical impairments from birth to age 21 and is a required member of the IEP team. The P/HD teacher must also provide direct and/or indirect services to address educational accommodations and specialized instruction unique to a student's physical impairment. Other responsibilities include assisting the team in developing goals and objectives, curriculum modifications, and environmental accommodations to meet the individualized educational needs of the student, as well as utilizing assistive technology to ensure access to curriculum and materials.