

Eligibility Categories

The MDE Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) define eligibility for special education services within thirteen (13) categories of disability. Clicking on the rule listed at the end of each description will take you to the complete rule. You can also view the [full MARSE document](#) on [MDE's webpage](#). Be sure to check out our webpages on [Eligibility](#) and [Evaluation](#). Remember, an eligibility label does not determine services or placement.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Students with autism spectrum disorder have a lifelong developmental disability that adversely affects educational performance in academic, behavioral, and/or social ways. Students exhibit impairments in reciprocal social interactions; qualitative impairments in communication, and restricted range of interests/repetitive behavior. Unusual or inconsistent responses to sensory stimuli may also be present. [Rule 340.1715](#)

Cognitive Impairment (CI) Students with cognitive impairment learn at a slower rate than “typical” students. Learning and independence levels vary, and programs will range from teaching academic and vocational skills, teaching daily living and pre-vocational skills, to teaching basic self-help skills. These students’ progress will often be measured with alternate assessments. [Rule 340.1705](#)

Deaf-Blindness (DB) Students have concomitant hearing and visual impairment, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that require special supports. [Rule 340.1717](#)

Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD) Students eligible under this category are children up to seven (7) years of age whose development is significantly delayed in one or more areas, and who do not qualify under any other special education eligibility. [Rule 340.1711](#)

Emotional Impairment (EI) Students with emotional impairment demonstrate behavioral problems, related to withdrawal, depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, physical complaints, etc., over an extended period of time that negatively affect their ability to learn. [Rule 340.1706](#)

Hearing Impairment (HI) Students with any degree of hearing loss that interferes with learning. These persons may have mild or moderate hearing loss or be totally deaf. [Rule 340.1707](#)

Other Health Impairment (OHI) Students with other health impairments have limited strength, vitality, or alertness which adversely affect the student’s ability to learn. This includes attention deficit disorder, and health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, and diabetes. [Rule 340.1709a](#)

Physical Impairment (PI) Students with physical impairment have physical challenges which affect their ability to learn and may require adapted and/or special materials or equipment. [Rule 340.1709](#)

Severe Multiple Impairment (SXI) Students with multiple impairments have more than one disability in intellectual, physical and/or functional abilities. They typically require intensive intervention and supports for activities of daily living. [Rule 340.1714](#)

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Students with a specific learning disability have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. [Rule 340.1713](#)

Speech and Language Impairment (SLI) Students who have difficulty with understanding or use of language may

have speech or language impairment. This may interfere with learning and/or social adjustment in school and elsewhere. Typical symptoms may include poor listening skills, unclear speech, slow vocabulary development, immature grammar, difficulties with conversation, unusual loudness or quality of voice, or stuttering. [Rule 340.1710](#)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Students with traumatic brain injury have an acquired injury to the brain that has been caused by external physical force. This results in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. [Rule 340.1716](#)

Visual Impairment (VI) Students who have severe problems with vision, whether partially sighted or blind, which interferes with development and learning. Characteristics may include visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye, after correction, or a peripheral field of vision restricted to not more than 20 degrees. [Rule 340.1708](#)