MID-DELTA HEAD START
DISABILITY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Child's Name: _________________________ Parent's Name: _______________________

Address: ________________________________________________________________

Please place a check mark (✓) by the Disability Eligibility Criteria that applies to the above-named child and complete the last section.

HEALTH IMPAIRMENT/ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

A child may be classified as having an attention deficit disorder under this category that has chronic and pervasive developmentally inappropriate inattention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity. To be considered a disorder, this behavior must affect the child's functioning severely. To avoid overuse of this category, grantees are cautioned to assure that only the enrolled children who most severely manifest this behavior must be classified in the category.

(1) The condition must severely affect the performance of a child who is trying to carry out a developmentally appropriate activity that requires orienting, focusing, or maintaining attention during classroom instructions and activities, planning and completing activities, or participating in group activities. It also may be manifested in overactivity or impulsive acts which appear to be or are interpreted as physical aggression. The disorder must manifest itself in at least two different settings, one of which must be the Head Start Program site.

(2) Children must not be classified as having attention deficit disorder based on:

(a) Temporary problems in attention due to events such as divorce, death of a family member or post-traumatic stress reactions to events such as sexual abuse or violence in the neighborhood.
(b) Problems in attention which occur suddenly and acutely with psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia;
(c) Behaviors which may be caused by frustration stemming from inappropriate programming beyond the child's ability level or by developmentally inappropriate demands for long periods of inactive, passive activity;
(d) Intentional noncompliance or opposition to reasonable request that are typical of good preschool programs; or
(e) Inattention due to cultural or language differences.

(3) An attention deficit disorder must have had its onset in early childhood and have persisted through the course of child development when children normally mature and become able to operate in a socialized preschool environment.

HEALTH IMPAIRMENT

1. A child is classified as health impaired who has limited strength, vitality or alertness due to a chronic or acute health problem which adversely affects learning.
2. The health impairment classification may include but is not limited to, cancer, some neurological disorders, rheumatic fever, severe asthma, uncontrolled seizure disorders, heart conditions, lead poisoning, diabetes, AIDS, blood disorders; including hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, cystic fibrosis, heart disease and attention deficit disorder.
3. This category includes medically fragile children such as ventilator dependent children who are in need of special education and related services.

MDCS (3/00)
**EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS**

1. An emotional/behavioral disorder is a condition in which a child's behavioral or emotional responses are so different from those of the generally accepted, age-appropriate norms of children with the same ethnic or cultural background as to result in significant impairment in social relationships, self-care, educational process or classroom behavior. A child is classified as having an emotional/behavioral disorder who exhibits one or more of the following characteristics with such frequency, intensity, or duration as to require intervention:

   (a) Seriously delayed social development including an inability to build or maintain satisfactory (age appropriate) interpersonal relationships with peers or adults (e.g., avoids playing with peers);
   (b) Inappropriate behavior (e.g., dangerously aggressive towards others, self-destructive, severely withdrawn, non-communicative);
   (c) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, or evidence of excessive anxiety or fears (e.g., frequent crying episodes, constant need for reassurance); or
   (d) Has a professional diagnosis of serious emotional disturbance.

2. The eligibility decision must be based on multiple sources of data, including assessment of the child's behavior or emotional functioning in multiple settings.

**VISUAL IMPAIRMENT INCLUDING BLINDNESS**

1. A child is classified as visually impaired when visual impairment, with correction, adversely affects a child's learning. The term includes both blind and partially seeing children. A child is visually impaired if:

   (a) The vision loss meets the definition of legal blindness in the state of residence; or
   (b) Central acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with corrective lenses, or visual acuity is greater than 20/200, but is accompanied by a limitation in the field of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

2. A child is classified as having a visual impairment if central acuity with corrective lenses is between 20/70 and 20/200 in either eye, or if visual acuity is undetermined, but there is demonstrated loss of visual function that adversely affects the learning process, including faulty muscular action, limited field of vision, cataracts, etc.

**HEARING IMPAIRMENT INCLUDING DEAFNESS**

1. A child is classified as deaf if a hearing impairment exists which is so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, and learning is affected. A child is classified as hard of hearing who has a permanent or fluctuating hearing impairment which adversely affects learning; or

2. Meets the legal criteria for being hard of hearing established by the state of residence; or

3. Experiences recurrent temporary or fluctuating hearing loss caused by otitis media, allergies, or eardrum perforation and other outer or middle ear anomalies over a period of three months or more. Problems associated with temporary or fluctuating hearing loss can include impaired listening skills, delayed language development, and articulation problems.

**ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT**

1. A child is classified as having an orthopedic impairment if the condition is severe enough to adversely affect a child's learning. An orthopedic impairment involves muscles, bones, or joints and is characterized by impaired ability to maneuver in educational or non-educational settings, to perform fine or gross motor activities, or to perform self-help skills and by adversely affected educational performance.
ORTHEPEDIC IMPAIRMENT – Continued

2. An orthopedic impairment includes, but is not limited to, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, loss of or deformed limbs, contracture caused by burns, arthritis, or muscular dystrophy.

MENTAL RETARDATION

1. A child is classified as mentally retarded who exhibits significantly sub-average intellectual functioning and exhibits deficits in adaptive behavior which adversely affects learning. Adaptive behavior to age-appropriate coping with the demands of the environment through independent skills in self-care, communication and play.

(a) Measurement of adaptive behavior must reflect objective documentation through the use of an established scale and appropriate behavior/anecdotal records. An assessment of the child's functioning must also be made in settings outside the classroom.

(b) Valid and reliable instruments appropriate to the age range must be used. If they do not exist for the language and cultural group to which the child belongs, observation and professional judgement are to be used instead.

(c) Determination that a child is mentally retarded is never to be made on the basis of any one test alone.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

A child is classified as having traumatic brain injury whose brain injuries are caused by an external physical force, or by an internal occurrence such as stroke or aneurysm, with resulting impairments that adversely affect educational performance. The term includes children with open or closed head injuries, but does not include children with brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or caused by birth trauma.

AUTISM

A child is classified as having autism when the child has a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and non-verbal communications and social interaction, that is generally evidenced before age three and that adversely affect educational performance.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

1. A child is classified as having a learning disability who has a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak or, for preschool age children, acquire the precursor skills for reading, writing, spelling or doing mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, and aphasia.

2. An evaluation team may recommend that a child be classified as having a learning disability if:

(a) The child does not achieve commensurate with his or her age and ability levels in one or more of the areas listed in (a) above when provided with appropriate learning experiences for the age and ability; or

(b) The child has a severe discrepancy between achievement of developmental milestones and intellectual ability in one or more of these area: oral expression, listening comprehension, pre-writing, and pre-mathematics; or

(c) The child shows deficits in such abilities as memory, perceptual and perceptual-motor skills, thinking, language and non-verbal activities which are not due to visual, motor, hearing, or emotional disabilities, mental retardation, cultural or language factors, or lack of experience which would help develop these skills.

3. This definition for learning disabilities applies to four and five year old children in Head Start. It may be used as a program's discretion for children younger than four or when a three year old child is referred with a professional diagnosis of learning disability.
1. If the State Education Agency eligibility criteria for preschool children include an additional category which is appropriate for a Head Start child, children meeting the criteria for that category must receive services as children with disabilities in Head Start Programs. Examples are “preschool disabled”, “in need of special education”, “educationally disabled”, and “non-categorically disabled”.

2. Children ages three to five, inclusive, who are experiencing developmental delays, as defined by their State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development, and who by reason therefore need special education and related services may receive services as children with disabilities in Head Start Programs.

3. Children who are classified as deaf-blind, whose concomitant hearing and visual impairments cause such severe communication and other developmental problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for deaf or blind children are eligible for services under this category.

4. Children classified as having multiple disabilities whose concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation and blindness), in combination, cause such severe educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education solely for one of the impairments are eligible for services under this category. The term does not include deaf-blind children, for record keeping purposes.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SECTION

In reference to the above definitions:

Does this child have a classification listed above? Yes _____ No _____ (Place a check mark (✓) in the space provided by the correct classification listed above.)

Diagnosis: ________________________________________________________________

RECOMMENDATIONS: ______________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Professional degree: ______________________________________________________