

# Quick Reference Guide on Special Needs

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*Parents often ask me, as an educational specialist, of all the special needs children we work with what are the characteristics for these special needs. I have put together a quick reference guide that I hope you will find useful and beneficial. Remember your child is special so continue to provide special support and guidance because they deserve it! At Armenta Learning Academy we provide counseling, education, and enrichment programs to assist you and your child of all ages, levels and needs.*

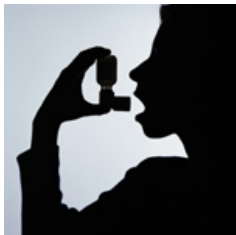
**ADHD** - commonly known as ADD and present symptoms are grouped as either related to inattentiveness, related to hyperactivity and impulsivity or a combination of both. Normal three to four year old children often have a pattern of these behaviors of inattention and overactivity, but may not be related to ADHD.

**Anorexia** - lack of appetite, desire for food, usually begins to attempt to lose weight.

**Anoxia** - brain cell death resulting from the absence of oxygen to the brain.

**Antisocial Personality Disorder** – disorder characterized by poor communication and people skills. Sufferers are prone to criminal behavior and are more concerned with their own needs than the needs of others.

**Anxiety Disorder** - a psychiatric disorder marked by apprehension, uncertainty and unrealistic worry.



**Aspergers Syndrome** - a condition where young children experience impaired social interactions and develop limited repetitive patterns of behavior. Motor milestones may be delayed and clumsiness is often observed.

**Asthma** - respiratory disorder that creates difficulty breathing set off by allergy infection, inhaling cold air or stress.

**Ataxia** - lack of muscle condition exists from birth caused by injury or disease and manifests in irregular movements of body, such as clumsy walking.

**Auditory Processing Disorder** - disorder with difficulty of auditory figure ground, temporal discriminatory, sound localization, auditory discrimination and pattern recognition and listening with competing distorted signals. This creates trouble with sorting, understanding or remembering what he/she hears and carrying out directions.

**Autism** - autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Children and adults with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities. The disorder makes it hard for them to communicate with others and relate to the outside world. In some cases, aggressive and/or self-injurious behavior may be present. Persons with autism may exhibit repeated body movements (hand flapping, rocking), unusual responses to people or attachments to objects and resistance to changes in routines. Individuals may also experience sensitivities in the five senses such as sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.

**Battered Child Syndrome** - physical abuses of child often deliberate and repeated by a parent or guardian.

**Bipolar Disorder** - this disorder is characterized by repeated, at least two, episodes in which the patients mood and activity levels are significantly disturbed, this disturbance consisting on some occasions of an elevation of mood, increased energy and activity, such as mania or hypo mania, and on others of a lowering mood and decreased energy and activity, known as depression.

**Borderline Personality Disorder** - A pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and behavior, and marked by impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, such as impulsivity, frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment, recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior, chronic feelings of emptiness, inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (i.e. frequent displays of temper, consistent anger, recurrent physical fights), transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe Dissociative symptoms.

**Bulimia** - a disorder characterized by compulsive eating and often followed by self-induced vomiting.

**Cerebral Palsy** - number of conditions marked by impaired muscle control caused by nerve or brain damage usually at birth.

**Cognitive Disorder** - unable to see similarities and differences, draw conclusions, make inferences, classify, categorize, summarize. Experience difficulty with memorizing and learning information by rote and through writing, gesturing and speaking.

**Conduct Disorder** - a childhood mental disorder characterized by an ongoing pattern of behavior that violates the rights of others, such as physical aggression, destruction of property, lying and stealing.

**Dependent Personality Disorder** - People with this disorder tend to cling to others for fear of losing them. They become depressed and can be suicidal when relationships end.

**Depression** - mental illness characterized by sadness, general apathy, a loss of self-esteem, feeling guilt, and, at times suicidal tendencies.

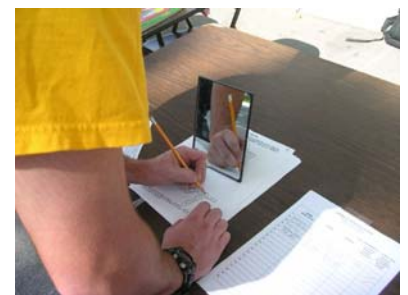
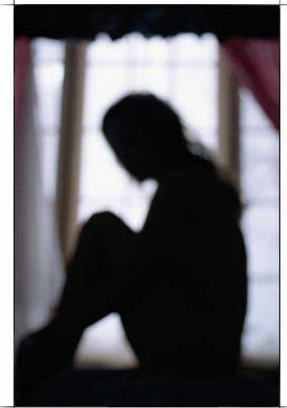
**Dissociative Identity Disorder** - a mental disorder characterized by ones personality becoming so traumatized that pronounced changes in behavior and reactivity are noticed between social situations or social roles.

**Dyscalculia** - dyscalculia is a specific learning difficulty in math. Like dyslexia, dyscalculia can be caused by a visual perceptual deficit. Dyscalculia refers specifically to the inability to perform operations in math or arithmetic. It is a lesser-known disability, much like dyslexia. In fact it is considered a variation of dyslexia. People with dyscalculia generally have a normal IQ level, but have problems with mathematics, time, directions, etc. Dyscalculia is rare and many cases are mis-diagnoses of normal dyslexia, which also makes learning mathematics difficult.

**Dysgraphia** - Dysgraphia is the inability to write, regardless of ability to read. People with Dysgraphia often can write, but lack co-ordination, and find other tasks like tying shoes difficult. They also lack basic spelling skills, and often will say the wrong word when trying to formulate thoughts.

**Dyslexia** - a neurologically based disorder often familial, which interferes with the acquisition and processing of language. Varying in degrees of severity, it is manifested by difficulties in receptive and expressive language, including phonological processing, in reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, and sometimes in arithmetic. Dyslexia is not the result of motivation, sensory impairment, inadequate instructional or environmental opportunities, or other limiting conditions, but may occur together with these conditions. Although dyslexia is life long, individuals with dyslexia frequently respond successfully to timely and appropriate intervention.

**Epilepsy** - a neurological disorder that causes recurring seizures, Epilepsy has no apparent cause, but could be related to tumor, pressure, or injury on the brain. Epilepsy cannot be prevented, but seizures can be controlled by medication, allowing the epileptic to lead a normal life.



**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome** - abnormal anatomical features and physiological defects including growth defects, skeletal malformation, mental retardation, hyperactivity, and heart murmurs.

**Histrionic Personality Disorder** - Individuals who seek attention and often dominate situations, conversations, and people in general. Sufferers seek constant praise and affections from others at any cost.

**Huntington's Disease** - a rare heredity degenerative disease of the central nervous system typified by progressive mental deterioration and involuntary movements.

**Hysteria** - an excessive emotional state. A psychiatric condition in which one responds to anxiety or threat with uncontrolled emotional or physical reaction by extreme emotional outbursts, blindness, loss of speech, etc.

**Insomnia** - The persistent inability to fall asleep or to remain asleep long enough to become rested. The most common cause is due to worry.



**Mental Disorder** - a pattern of behavioral or psychological symptoms associated with one or more major negative times, such as disability and confinement, distress, pain, and injury.

**Narcissistic Personality Disorder** - Individuals who are picky and selective and feel they deserve the best and that others are unworthy. They are generally uninterested in others' feelings and can easily try to take advantage of others.

**Narcolepsy** - a disorder characterized by sudden uncontrolled lapses into sleep that is brief and deep.

**Neurosis** - an emotional or psychological disorder usually manifested by anxiety or depression and inability to deal with and adjust to the ordinary stresses of life.

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder** - anxiety disorder that involves recurrent obsessions or compulsions severe enough to consume or cause great difficulty in life with thoughts impulse, and images. Usually this OCD occurs a minimum of one hour each day.

**Oppositional Defiant Disorder**- a childhood mental disorder characterized by ongoing patterns of behaviors hostile towards others.

**PANDAS** - Pediatric Autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with sudden onset of or exacerbation of OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) symptoms following "strep throat" or scarlet fever.

**Panic Disorder** - a psychiatric disorder marked by intense anxiety and panic leading to symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath and sweating.

**Paranoia** - having unfounded suspicions and beliefs that one is being followed, plotted against, persecuted, etc. Exhibits continuous distrust and constant suspicion of others.

**Paraplegia** - paralysis of the lower part of the body which is usually caused by damage in the spinal cord, may only affect the use of the lower limbs, or it may encompass the lower trunk as well as causing dysfunction of the bladder and rectum.

**Parkinsons Disease** - a nervous disorder characterized primarily by tremor, muscle rigidity and a jerky gait. The condition may be marked by uncontrollable shaking, difficulty in starting to move, a stooped posture and



expressionless face. Shaking may be more noticeable with tension and excitement or when resting. In later stages, speech, eating and writing becomes more difficult.

**Post Traumatic Stress Disorder** - characterized by the requirement that a person must have been traumatized by a catastrophic stress such as avoidant/numbing and hyperarousal. Daytime recollections and nightmares evoke panic, terror, grief and despair.

**Progressive Supranuclear Palsy** - weakness and paralysis caused by brain cell deterioration in the cerebral cortex, basal ganglia, and other upper motor areas.

**Psychotic Disorder** - mental disorder characterized by impairment in perceptions of reality.

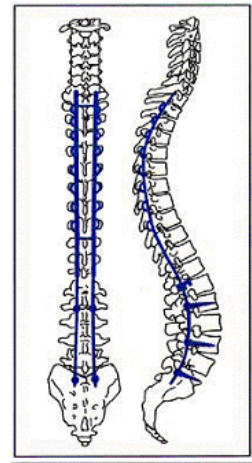
**Personality Disorder** - personality disorders form a class of mental disorders that are characterized by long-lasting rigid patterns of thought and behavior. Because of the inflexibility and pervasiveness of these patterns, they can cause serious problems and impairment of functioning for the persons who are affected with these disorders, and have a tendency to withdraw from others.

**Schizotypal Personality Disorder** - A pervasive pattern of detachment from social relationships and a restricted range of emotions in interpersonal settings, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts. Their speech is often over-elaborate and difficult to follow.

**Scoliosis** - an abnormal curvature of the spine usually occurs late in life resulting from disease of the bones and can be corrected by surgery.

**Sensory Integration Disorder** - a dysfunction of the brain by which sensory input is not organized and becomes a challenge for information to be used appropriately.

**Sensory Motor Skill Disorder** - lacks fine muscle control. Handwriting is usually messy and off the lines. Capital and small letters may be used randomly and writing is slow and laborious.



**Social Phobia** - a disorder characterized by episodes of panic, anxiety in social settings due to excessive concern, and public embarrassment over possible adverse scrutiny.

**Sydenhams** - condition triggered by rheumatic infection of the brain and characterized by involuntary major muscle movements involving the face, neck, and limbs.

**Tourettes Syndrome** - involuntary disorder characterized by semi voluntary motor tics and vocalizations, different examples of this include eye blinking, tongue protrusion, and throat clearing. Although the cause of TS is unknown, current research points to abnormalities in certain brain regions including the basal ganglia, frontal lobes, and cortex, the circuits that interconnect these regions, and the neurotransmitters dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine responsible for communication among nervous cells.

**Visual Processing Disorder** - difficulty making sense out of what he/she sees in reading. In spelling letters are omitted and reversed. Sight vocabulary will be limited. It is difficult to fit things together such as puzzles, or writing in margins.



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