



Brain Injury
Association
of New Jersey

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Traumatic Brain Injury & NJ Special Education

In 1998, the New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code added the category of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to the list of disabilities defined by the New Jersey Special Education System as consideration for eligibility under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Traumatic Brain Injury, under the New Jersey Special Education Code, “means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or insult to the brain, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory; perceptual and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech.”

Is your child receiving special educational services because of a traumatic brain injury?

If your answer is yes, the most appropriate category in the New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code to describe your child’s need for services is TBI. The correct category can help ensure that the specialized services necessary for growing up with a brain injury are always considered when developing an educational plan. Utilizing the correct category for Special Education Services will help raise awareness about the prevalence of brain injury, the need for understanding of brain injury issues, and the need for support for students, families, and educators alike.

Brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability in children and young adults

- More than one million children receive a brain injury each year
- More than 30,000 will have lifelong disabilities as a result of the brain injury
- Among children ages 0 to 14 years, traumatic brain injury results in an estimated 3,000 deaths each year. This is six times the number of deaths related to HIV/AIDS
- The most common cause of traumatic brain injury among young children is falls, which occur more often in younger children and taper off as children get older
- Adolescents (ages 15–21) sustain almost half of all traumatic brain injuries in the birth to 21 age group
- Brain injuries from assaults and motor vehicle crashes occur more often in the high school and post high-school years (15–21)
- Other causes of brain injury among children include physical abuse, skate boarding, rollerblading, falling off a bike or scooter, playground falls and sports injuries

Possible Changes After Brain Injury

Thinking

- Memory
- Decision Making
- Planning
- Sequencing
- Judgment
- Processing Speed
- Problem Solving
- Persistence
- Organization
- Self-perception
- Perception
- Inflexibility

Physical Abilities

- Motor coordination
- Hearing and visual changes
- Spasticity and tremors
- Fatigue and/or weakness
- Taste and smell
- Balance
- Mobility
- Speech
- Seizures

Personality & Behavior

- Depression
- Lack of social skills
- Mood swings
- Lack of emotional control
- Inappropriate behavior
- Inability to inhibit remarks
- Lack of response to social cues
- Lack of initiation
- Reduced self-esteem
- Difficulty relating to others
- Stress, anxiety, and frustration
- Difficulty forming new relationships