

Definitions of various forms of disability of students requiring additional support services

(a) Physical Disability

A person with physical disabilities is defined as a person who has disabilities of orthopaedic, musculoskeletal, or neurological origin which may affect locomotor functions, and constitute a disadvantage or restriction in one or more aspects of daily living activities.

(b) Visual Impairment

Total blindness: persons with no visual function, i.e. no light perception.

Low vision:

- (i) severe low vision - persons with visual acuity (refers to the visual acuity of the better eye with correcting glasses) of 6/120 or worse and persons with constricted visual field in which the widest field diameter subtends an angular subtense of 20 degrees or less, irrespective of the visual acuity;
- (ii) moderate low vision - persons with visual acuity from 6/60 to better than 6/120; and
- (iii) mild low vision - persons with visual acuity from 6/18 to better than 6/60.

(c) Hearing Impairment

| <u>Degree of Hearing Impairment</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (i) Profound | Hearing threshold greater than 90 dB |
| (ii) Severe | Hearing threshold from 71 to 90 dB |
| (iii) Moderately Severe | Hearing threshold from 56 to 70 dB |
| (iv) Moderate | Hearing threshold from 41 to 55 dB |
| (v) Mild | Hearing threshold from 26 to 40 dB |
| (vi) Normal | Hearing threshold up to 25 dB |

(d) Intellectual Disability

Intellectual disability is a condition with the following features:

- (i) significantly sub-average intellectual functioning: an intelligence quotient (IQ) of approximately 70 or below on an individually administered IQ test (for infants, a clinical judgment of significantly sub-average intellectual functioning);
- (ii) concurrent deficits or impairments in present adaptive functioning (i.e., the person's effectiveness in meeting the standards expected for his/her age by his/her cultural group) in at least two of the following skill areas: communication, self-care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, health and safety; and
- (iii) onset before the age of 18.

(e) Autism

Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder and frequently co-exists with a variety of other disabilities. In Hong Kong, children suffering from autistic disorder are diagnosed under the following criteria as laid down in the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases, 10th edition:

- (i) qualitative impairments in reciprocal social interaction;
- (ii) qualitative impairments in verbal and non-verbal communications;
- (iii) restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests and activities; and
- (iv) developmental abnormalities which are apparent in the first three years of life.

(f) Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Children and adolescents with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder usually have the following three symptoms: inattentiveness, hyperactivity and weak impulse control. These lead to chronic difficulties in social life, learning and work. These symptoms cannot be explained by any other objective factors and psychiatric conditions and are not meeting with the standards expected for a child's intellectual ability or stage development. They are generally regarded as being related to brain dysfunction.

(g) Specific Learning Difficulties

Specific Learning Difficulties generally refer to difficulties in reading and writing (dyslexia), motor coordination disorder, specific dysphasia, etc., and the most common type is dyslexia. Dyslexia is not caused by mental deficiency, sensory impairment or the lack of learning opportunities. It is generally regarded as something relating to brain dysfunction. As a result of persistent and serious learning difficulties in reading and writing, persons with Specific Learning Difficulties are unable to read and spell/write accurately and fluently.

In general, dyslexia can be improved through appropriate accommodations in teaching methods, tests and assessments, as

well as proper use of information technology. The findings of overseas researches indicate that early identification and intervention for students with dyslexia can effectively improve their literacy skills.

(h) Speech and Language Impairment

Persons with speech and language impairment are those who cannot communicate effectively with others, or whose speech difficulty draws undue attention to their speech acts to such an extent that affects their academic, emotional and social developments.

(The above definitions are adapted from “Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan 2005-2007”)