

Traumatic Brain Injury - TBI

An overview for school professionals

Traumatic Brain Injury is an injury to the brain caused by outside trauma to the head. The trauma could be caused by a blow to the head, fall, motor vehicle accident or blast of an explosion. It can possibly lead to permanent or temporary impairment of cognitive, physical, and psychosocial functions, with an associated diminished or altered state of consciousness

What are some common symptoms of TBI?

- headaches
- dizziness, poor balance
- sensitivity to light or sounds
- blurry vision
- impaired memory
- irritability and moodiness
- seizures
- joint, skin or eye irritations.

What type of support plan is appropriate for a student with a TBI?

The needs of students with a TBI can vary. Some may require a 504 plan, and others will require an Individualized Education Plan. The diagnosis of **traumatic brain injury** gives reasonable cause to bypass the SST process, which will allow you to provide immediate accommodations to the student. All teachers who provide instruction for your student should be made aware of these accommodations.

Problems at school that may result from a TBI can include:

- Attention and concentration
- Memory
- Planning and organization
- Reasoning and problem solving
- Expressive speech or language problems
- Impulsivity
- Difficulty with processing information
- Social interaction

What accommodations are necessary for a student with TBI?

Classroom Accommodations:

- Allow additional time to complete in-class assignments
- Allow for extra or extended breaks
- Provide student with instructor's notes or help student obtain quality notes from other students
- Allow student to audio record lectures for later playback
- Provide both oral and written instructions; clarify instructions
- For lectures, provide student with an outline or study guide when available
- Allow use of a portable computer with spelling and grammar checks for assignments and note-taking
- In grading work, reduce emphasis on spelling and grammatical errors unless it is the purpose of the assignment
- Permit referencing a dictionary or thesaurus for assignments
- Provide preferential seating at or near the front of the classroom
- Reduce quantity of work required, in favor of quality.
- Avoid placing student in high pressure situations (e.g., short time frames, extensive volume of work; highly competitive)
- Exempt student from reading aloud in front of classmates because of impaired reading skills.

Test Accommodations:

- Allow additional time to complete tests.
- Provide for completion of tests in a quiet, individual environment with the goal of minimizing distractions.
- Administer long examinations in a series of shorter segments with breaks allowed between sections.
- Allow oral examinations and assist student in having responses scribed, as needed.
- Assess knowledge using multiple-choice instead of open-ended questions.
- Allow student to clarify and explain responses on exams (and assignments).
- Permit student to keep a sheet with mathematic formulas for reference, unless memorizing the formulas is required.
- Permit student's use of a calculator.
- Permit the student to utilize a dictionary and thesaurus in writing test responses.
- If two exams are scheduled on the same day, allow student to reschedule one for another day.

The list of accommodations above is not meant to be exhaustive; each student's unique needs will dictate the appropriate accommodations to be listed in his/her 504 plan.

Additional Resources:

- <http://www.brainline.org/index.html>
- <http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-children.htm>
- <http://www.msctc.org/tbi/factsheets/Returning-To-School-After-Traumatic-Brain-Injury>