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# Special Education Basics

— Incidence, Impact and  
Intervention in Oakland —

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# What we'll cover...

- What is Special Education, and why is it essential in our public schools?
- The Special Education Continuum in Oakland
- OUSD Special Education Fast Facts
- High-Incidence Disabilities: Incidence and Impact

# What is Special Education?

# A brief history...



25 minutes

1975: Education for All Handicapped Children Act establishes the concept of a legal right to Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).



2004-2007: Revisions to IDEA include new requirements for evaluation and identification of students with disabilities, as well as dispute resolution and due process procedures.

1990-1997: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ties Federal funding to providing individualized services and instruction in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



2017: The Supreme Court issued a decision in the matter of *Endrew F.*, which involved a young man with Autism and his right to a FAPE. The Court held that students have a right to more than *de minimus* progress.

# Reading & Discussion: Special Education in the US

→ Turn & Talk:

- Find an elbow partner
- Discuss the following questions:
  - What surprised you or stood out to you about the history of services for students with disabilities in our country?
  - Why is Special Education programming so essential in our public schools?

We'll debrief as a whole group after **five minutes**.

# Who are our students with disabilities in OUSD, and how are they served?



# The Special Education Continuum

Legally, we must provide a continuum of services to support all students in the least restrictive manner possible.

A student should only be removed from a general education classroom when less restrictive options have been considered and eliminated based on assessed need.

The services and supports a child requires should be discussed in an IEP team meeting and cannot be implemented without parent consent.

Teams should conduct ongoing progress monitoring to reevaluate student setting and adjust the IEP document as the child develops.



Less Restrictive



Most Restrictive

## Resource & Inclusion

Specialized Instruction primarily in regular setting.

Often high-incidence disabilities (learning disabilities, ADHD) with mild impact. Students may have separate setting minutes for IEP goal work.

## Special Day Classes

Specialized Instruction 50-100% of instructional day

Can be Mild-Mod, Mod, or Mod-Severe in impact. Small group, separate instruction.

## Nonpublic Schools

Separate Instruction 100% of day

Complex needs due to Autism, intellectual or emotional challenges that impact safety.

## Home-Hospital

Specialized Instruction Only 1-5 times/wk.

Disabilities resulting in extreme physical/emotional health issues. Often short-term.



# Program Guide

**Program Guide 2019**

# Research-Based Instructional Planning

Research suggests that building a flexible continuum through collaboration across teachers serves more students in the LRE compared to siloed programs.

## The Old Way



One  
teacher,  
one aide



One  
teacher,  
three  
aides

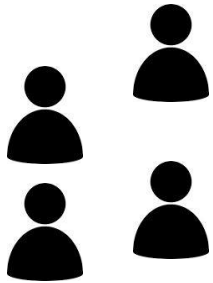


One  
teacher,  
one aide

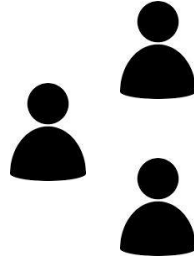
Each  
student  
must fit  
in a  
bucket or  
move to  
a  
different  
school

Research suggests that building a flexible continuum through collaboration across teachers serves more students in the LRE compared to siloed programs.

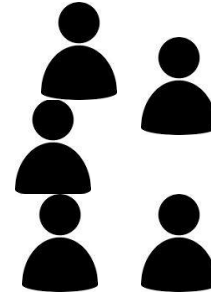
### The Research-Based Way



These students need separate ELA instruction



These students need separate ELA and math instruction



These students need just prompts and support in class



We have three total teachers and five total aides. Let's group these students and assign our staff based on what the students require at each point in their school day!

**What are the highest-incidence disabilities in Oakland, and how do they impact instruction?**





30 minutes

# Incidence Rates in OUSD

- Our top two disabilities account for over half of all students with IEPs in Oakland.
- Over 80% of all students have disabilities with a mild or moderate impact.
  - 1362 Speech-Language Impairment- SLI (21%)
  - 2244 Specific Learning Disability- SLD (34%)
    - 1128 Autism- AUT (17%)
  - 309 Emotional Disturbance- ED (4.7%)
  - 529 Intellectual Disability- ID (8%)
  - 766 Other Health Impairment- OHI (11.6%)

Oakland's rates of students eligible under Autism have risen over the last several years and are continuing to climb. This is a part of a nation-wide increase.

Autism is a spectrum-based disorder impacting communication, socialization and behavior. While most students have a mild-moderate impact, some students are profoundly impacted, requiring intensive support with all basic functions at school.

# OUSD's Top Five

## Specific Learning Disability

### Definition:

Specific Learning Disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in processing information, that may manifest itself in challenges with visual, auditory, sensory, or conceptual reasoning. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of: visual, hearing, motor or intellectual disabilities or cultural, environmental, or language acquisition factors.

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# Specific Learning Disability

Disability	What's Happening in the Brain?	Observable Differences/Needs:
SLD: Visual Processing	A student may be cognitively typical but have neural pathways that interfere with the psychological processes of sequencing or retaining <b>VISUAL</b> stimuli.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student may swap or omit letters when reading or writing</li><li>• The student may quickly forget items (s)he sees</li><li>• The student may have difficulty quickly naming common words or objects</li></ul>
SLD: Auditory processing	A student may be cognitively typical but have neural pathways that interfere with the psychological processes of sequencing or retaining <b>AUDITORY</b> stimuli.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student may have limited oral vocabulary</li><li>• The student may quickly forget verbal directions</li><li>• The student may struggle with syntax or phonemic awareness</li></ul>



# OUSD's Top Five

## Speech Language Impairment

### Definition:

Speech Language Impairment is defined as a communication disorder that adversely affects the child's ability to talk, understand, read, and write. This disability category can be divided into two groups: speech impairments and language impairments. This may include articulation disorders, expressive and receptive language disorders, pragmatic language issues, or issues with voice and fluency.

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# Speech Language Impairment

Disability	What's Happening in the Brain?	Observable Differences/Needs:
Speech Language Impairment (SLI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SLI refers to a group of different communication disorders in which messages between the communication and oral-motor centers of the brain.</li><li>• SLI may include apraxia, dysfluency, receptive language delays, or pragmatic language issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student may hesitate to speak or respond in single-word utterances.</li><li>• The student may have challenges understanding figurative language.</li><li>• The student may struggle to follow multi-step directions.</li></ul>

# OUSD's Top Five

## Other Health Impairment

### Definition:

Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that—

(i) Is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and

(ii) Adversely affects a child's educational performance.

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# Other Health Impairment- ADHD

Disability	What's Happening in the Brain?	Observable Differences/Needs:
Inattentive type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Children with ADHD may have neural activity that over-responsive to stimuli, which impairs focus and attention.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Difficulty focusing, including 'spacing out' or wandering, is a common symptom of inattentive-type ADD.</li><li>Students may be easily distracted and lose their train of thought often.</li></ul>
Hyperactive type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In hyperactive or combined-type ADHD, a child may have overactive motor impulses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hyperactive or combined-type ADHD may include fidgeting or stimming.</li><li>Many students with combined-type ADHD behave impulsively or have difficulty reflecting on prior actions.</li></ul>

# OUSD's Top Five

## Autism

### Definition:

Autism spectrum disorder is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, causing problems in social interaction and communication. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behavior, rigidity, echolalia and stereotypy. As a spectrum disorder, the impact can be mild to profound.

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## Disability

Autism  
Spectrum  
Disorders  
(AUT)

## What's Happening in the Brain?

Though the exact cause(s) is still unknown, Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects the development of the communication/language centers of the brain. Autism may co-occur with other nervous system disorders such as seizures.

## Observable Differences/Needs:

The student may have challenges with perspective-taking and changes in routine.  
The student may have limited imaginative play and delays in social skills.  
The student may respond best to visual aides and support.

# OUSD's Top Five

## Intellectual Disability

### Definition:

An intellectual disability is characterized by cognitive functioning that is substantially below the average range and concurrent challenges with adaptive behavior. Students with intellectual disabilities require more time to learn and generalize skills, may present as younger than age-equivalent peers, and may struggle with social, functional and behavioral skills.

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# Intellectual Disability

Disability	What's Happening in the Brain?	Observable Differences/Needs:
Intellectual Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neurological differences in the brain result in slower acquisition and generalization of skills.</li><li>• Brain connection challenges result in loss of previously acquired skills if not monitored and practiced with regularity.</li><li>• Other areas of the brain may be similarly impacted, resulting in motor, communication and behavioral delays.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students with ID require tangible, hands-on, and manipulative-driven instruction.</li><li>• Students with ID may struggle to process language, especially long or wordy directions, and benefit from visual/picture cues.</li><li>• Multiple opportunities to practice new skills and revisit skills</li></ul>



# Additional Supports and Resources





10 minutes

# Evidence-Based Practices, Supports, and Resources

**The Project-Based Learning Database:** <https://my.pblworks.org/projects>

**What Works Clearinghouse:** <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

**EBP Abstracts by Content:** <http://www.bestevidence.org/index.cfm>

**AFIRM Autism Practices Modules:** <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules>

**IRIS Center Instructional Modules:** <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/iris-resource-locator/>

# OUSD Data Stations

**Data Facts**

# SpEd Big Rocks

## Department Goals