

Adoption Advocacy

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Glossary of Terms

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) — a neurobiological condition that involves an inappropriate level of attention, concentration, activity, distractibility and impulsivity.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) — a neurological condition that involves problems with attention span, impulse control and activity level, Typical behaviors include: hyperactivity, fidgeting and difficulties remaining seated, distractibility, waiting for turns, staying on task, playing quietly, excessive talking, and inattention, forgetting supplies for task or activities, having trouble following directions and engaging in physically dangerous activities without considering the consequences.

Adjustment Disorder — occurs when a person develops emotional or behavioral symptoms in response to an identifiable stressor. Stressors can be natural disasters, events or crisis or interpersonal problems such as abuse. A child may have either marked distress or impairment in functioning.

Anxiety Disorder — a condition that causes intense feeling of anxiety and tension when there is no real danger. Symptoms cause significant distress and interfere with daily activities. Children with anxiety disorders may take extreme measures to avoid situations that provoke anxiety and may have physical symptoms such as restlessness, irritability, disturbed sleep, stomachaches and difficulty concentrating.

Attachment Disorder — is a condition in which individuals have difficulty forming loving, lasting relationships. This disorder varies in severity. The process of developing healthy attachments can be disrupted by abuse, neglect, abandonment, multiple moves for the child or multiple caregivers.

Autism — is a complex developmental disorder. It affects the brain's normal development of social and communication skills. Autism is a spectrum that encompasses a wide variety of behavior. Core features include impaired social interactions, impaired verbal and nonverbal communication and restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior. Symptoms may vary from quite mild to quite severe. Mild autism is known as Asperger's syndrome.

Bipolar — is a lifelong brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in a person's mood, energy and ability to function. Bipolar is characterized by an alternating pattern of emotional highs (mania) and lows (depression). Bipolar can range from mild condition to a severe condition. Symptoms may include deep sadness, apathy, sleep disturbance, poor appetite, low self-esteem and slowed thinking.

Conduct Disorder — is a combination of behavioral and emotional problems in children and adolescents. Behaviors include difficulty following the rules and behaving in an acceptable way.

Cystic Fibrosis — is a genetic condition that involves glands found throughout the body. This can affect many different **organs** in the body. Symptoms frequently involve the lungs and digestive system. Obstruction, infection and inflammation in the lungs are the most common characteristics.

Drug Exposed — child was exposed to drugs in utero. Depending on the type of drug and how often it was used during pregnancy the effects may vary. Some children may have behavior and learning difficulties due to central nervous system damage.

Encopresis — is the voluntary or involuntary passing of stool which usually results in the soiling of clothes by a child over the age of 4

Enuresis — is the voluntary or involuntary passing of urine during sleep or sometimes waking hours.

Epilepsy — is a brain disorder causing recurrent seizures.

Failure to Thrive — is a child with deficiencies in height and weight compared to other children of the same age, Child may have symptoms of malnutrition.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) — is a group of signs, symptoms and often birth defects that indicate a woman's use of alcohol during pregnancy; Children with FAS may grow less quickly than other children, have facial abnormalities and have problems with their central nervous system, including learning disabilities and sometimes mental retardation.

Heart Murmur — is a noise that the blood makes as it flows through the heart. These noises are common in children because their heart is very close to their chest wall. Sometimes heart murmurs can indicate a problem such as a hole in the heart, a leak in the heart valve or narrow heart valve.

Hepatitis — is the inflammation of the liver. The disease can be caused by infections from parasites, bacteria or viruses (such as Hepatitis A, B or C), liver damage from alcohol, drugs or poisonous mushrooms, overdose of acetaminophen or immune cells in the body attacking the liver and causing autoimmune Hepatitis,

Hydrocephalic — is an abnormal accumulation of fluid in the brain, causing enlargement of the head and often brain damage due to the increased pressure on the brain. Treatment involves surgical procedures to remove fluid or insert a shunt to release excess fluid.

Hyperactivity — increased movements, impulsiveness, distractibility, difficulty remaining still for a period of time and decreased attention span.

Macro cephalic — is a rare condition in which the head is abnormally large, sometimes resulting in mental and growth retardation.

Mental Retardation/Mild — is below average intellectual functioning. Those with mild mental retardation have an IQ between 55-69. These children may **be** able to learn to read and write up to the 4th or 5th grade level, live relatively independently and work with special training.

Mental Retardation/Moderate — IQ between 40-54. These children may have academic potential at the kindergarten or 1st grade level and may have limited ability to read, will need some support and supervision in daily living activities (like with a supportive family or supervised group home) and work with special training.

Mental Retardation/Severe — IQ of 25-39. Children in this range are unlikely to be able to learn to read or write, but may be able to be toilet trained and learn to dress with assistance. They usually require total supervision and support for daily living activities.

Micro cephalic — an abnormality in which the head is abnormally small and the brain is underdeveloped, resulting in some degree of mental retardation.

Mood Disorder — is a condition where the emotional mood is distorted or inappropriate to the situation. Mood disorder may be accompanied with depression, mood swings and emotional highs and lows.

Muscular Dystrophy (MD) — is a condition characterized by the deterioration and weakening of the skeletal muscles. There are several types of MD, Duchene MD, the most serious form, is a progressive, usually fatal condition. Other types are less severe and rarely fatal.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) — is a condition that can last throughout a person's life. Children diagnosed with OCD can become trapped in a pattern of repetitive thoughts and behaviors that are senseless and distressing, but extremely difficult to overcome. OCD involves anxious thoughts or rituals which you feel you can't control. Their symptoms can range from mild to severe.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) — is a disorder characterized by behavior such as frequent loss of temper, a tendency to argue with adults, refusal to obey authority, deliberately annoy others, spiteful and vindictive behavior, use of obscene language and a tendency to blame others for mistakes.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) — is a disorder that can occur in children who have experienced a terrifying event or ordeal in which severe and unusual physical or mental trauma occurred. Children who have been physically or sexually abused, witnessed violence and traumatic events may be prone to PTSD. It is common for the person to re-experience the event that traumatized them, in the form of flashbacks episodes, nightmares, memories or frightening thoughts, especially when they are exposed to events or objects reminiscent of the trauma. Symptoms may include emotional numbness, sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety, irritability or outbursts of anger.

Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) — is the inability to form normal relationships with others. Truly unattached children are not able to be genuinely affectionate with others, forming relationships on the basis of their own needs. They have no sense of belonging to anyone, and no sense of right or wrong, remorse or compassion. They do not trust adults, have extreme control issues and resist adult efforts to nurture or guide them. If an infant's needs are not met consistently in a loving, nurturing way, resulting in abuse, neglect, institutionalization, multiple changes in caregivers, attachment will not develop normally. Children with **RAD** may be dishonest, manipulative or cruel, some may form superficial relationships being charming and engaging.

Scoliosis — is a curve in the spine, treated by surgery, casts, exercises and braces to correct the curve.

Sexually Acting Out — may include various behaviors some of which include provocative behavior, fondling self or others, masturbation, perpetration or exposing private areas.

Shaken Baby Syndrome — is a severe form of head injury that occurs when a baby is shaken forcibly enough to cause the baby's brain to bounce against the skull. This may cause bruising, swelling, and bleeding of the brain, which may lead to permanent, severe brain damage or death.

Sickle Cell — the trait of sickle cell is inherited from only one parent and there are usually few or no symptoms. The main concern is possible transmission to offspring. Sickle cell anemia is a hereditary blood disease which abnormal hemoglobin causes red blood cells to become anemic, when a child inherits the trait from both biological parents, they will most likely have chronic anemia, an enlarged spleen, lethargy, weakness, blood clot formation and joint pain.

Spina Bifida (SB) — is a disorder involving incomplete development of the brain, spinal cord, and/or their protective coverings caused by the failure of the fetus's spine to close properly during the first month of pregnancy. Infants born with SB sometimes have an open lesion on their spine where significant damage to the nerves and spinal cord has occurred. Although the spinal opening can be surgically repaired shortly after birth, the nerve damage is permanent, resulting in varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs. Even when there is no lesion present there may be improperly formed or missing vertebrae and accompanying nerve damage. In addition to physical and mobility difficulties, most children have some form of learning disabilities.

