What is a Cognitive Impairment?

A cognitive impairment is a term used when there is a lack of development primarily in the cognitive domain and an impairment of an adaptive behavior. A cognitive impairment also adversely affects the student’s educational performance and development is at a rate at or below two standard deviations below the mean. In Michigan, a student can be classified as having a mild, moderate, or severe cognitive impairment.

How can it affect students?

Students with a cognitive impairment can reach a successful and fulfilling life, but they need individualized help in learning skills. Students with Cognitive Impairments may experience:

* Short attention span
* Lack of curiosity
* Lack of age-appropriate self-help skills
* Confusion in new situations or places
* Limited communication skills
* Difficulty understanding social rules
* Difficulty retaining information and learning simple routines

Tips for Teachers

* Breaking down tasks into smaller steps is important for students with cognitive impairments. They can have difficulty remembering how to do some tasks, so breaking it down into simple and small steps will allow students to help become more independent.
* Give students extra time to complete their tasks. It is important to be patient and give students that extra time in order for them to progress in the curriculum.
* Repeated instruction is also important for students with CI. Some students have difficulty in remembering the steps needed in order to finish a task and repeated instruction can help students be successful.

Websites for Further Information:

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disability: [www.aaidd.org](http://www.aaidd.org)

Facts on CI: [http://www.siskin.org/down loads/FactsonCognitiveImpairment.pdf](http://www.siskin.org/down%20loads/FactsonCognitiveImpairment.pdf)

The Arc: [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

Mild Cognitive Impairments: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mild-cognitive-impairment/DS00553>

What is a Hearing Impairment?

A hearing impairment is a hearing loss that prevents a person from totally receiving sounds through the ear and adversely affects a child’s educational performance. A hearing loss can be either mild or severe, and a person may be able to use sign language, lipreading, or hearing aids in order to communicate.

How can it affect students?

The degree of hearing impairment can vary widely from person to person. Some people have partial hearing loss and others have complete hearing loss. Hearing impairments can affect both expressive (ability to speak) and receptive (understanding of spoken language) communication. Students with hearing impairments may exhibit a difficulty in comprehension of printed language and vocabulary knowledge. Students with a hearing impairment may perform lower academically. A student with a hearing impairment often has difficulty with speech and speaking clearly. They also have difficulty in creating complex sentences. Some children with hearing impairments also report feeling isolated, without friends, and unhappy in school.

Tips for Teachers

* Raise your voice so students with hearing impairments can hear you. It is important not to shout though, so all students feel comfortable with voice level in the classroom.
* Speak slowly and clearly to students with cognitive impairments. No matter how students communicate with others, it is important to speak slowly so the student can gather all the information you are passing on, as well as to have a conversation with others.
* Include many visual items in your classroom, including: posters, charts, flash cards, manipulatives, graphic organizers, etc. It is important to make the student comfortable in the classroom

Websites for Further Information:

Deafness and Hearing Impairment: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs300/en/index.html>

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: <http://www.asha.org/>

Teaching Hearing Impaired Students: http:// www.brighthubeducation.com/special-ed-hearing-impairments/67528-tips-and-strate gies-for-teaching-hearing-impairedstudents

Hound Dog Hearing: http://www.hdhearing.com/index.htm