

What Is Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act/IDEA, (2004) "Traumatic brain injury" means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force. The injury results in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment (those thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with and towards others), or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries. The injuries result in impairments in one or more areas such as: cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem-solving, sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Ohio's Educational Definition of Traumatic Brain Injury

Ohio's educational definition of traumatic brain injury is not restricted to injuries resulting from external trauma. It is more inclusive than the IDEA definition. Ohio's definition covers conditions such as strokes, tumors, and injuries caused by surgeries. This expansion of the federal definition allows more children with brain injuries to be identified under the TBI category for the purpose of receiving special educational services.

The definition from Ohio rules is as follows:

"Traumatic brain injury" means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or by other medical conditions, including but not limited to stroke, anoxia, infectious disease, aneurysm, brain tumors and neurological insults resulting from medical or surgical treatments. The injury results in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries, as well as to other medical conditions that result in acquired brain injuries. The injuries result in impairments in one or more areas such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Source: Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Disabilities, http://ocali.org/lid/lid_tbi.php