

## How does a student with ADHD qualify for special education?

There have been no recent changes to how a student with ADHD might qualify for special education. As has been the case for the past several years the student with ADHD can qualify for special education under the following eligibility criteria: Emotionally Disturbed, Specific Learning Disability, and Other Health Impaired.

Given these multiple paths to eligibility, it is not always necessary for an ability/achievement discrepancy of any magnitude to be documented (i.e., OHI and ED criteria do not require such discrepancies).

Of course if the team feels that the child with ADHD is most appropriately eligible as a student with a specific learning disability, then an ability achievement discrepancy is typically required. However, nowhere in education code is it specified that the discrepancy has to be 23 points. What is required is a difference of 1.5 standard deviations from the mean of the given ability/achievement tests' discrepancy scores and the size of the discrepancy required will vary from one ability/achievement test pairing to another. In addition, if the given measures are judged to not be valid estimates of the child's skills (e.g., the culturally different child whose characteristics are not represented in the standardization sample of the tests available), then the team is directed by education code to use alternative methods to document the ability achievement discrepancy.

Source: California Association of School Psychologists Web Site  
[www.casponline.org](http://www.casponline.org)