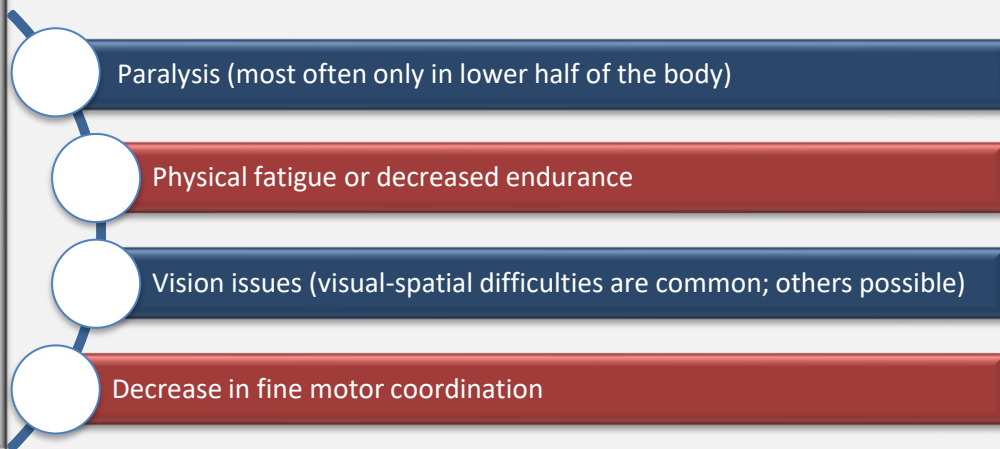


Quick Tip Sheet for Supporting Students who have Myelomeningocele Spina Bifida

General Overview:

Spina bifida is a congenital condition due to failure of part of an embryo's spinal column to form properly during the early gestational period. Myelomeningocele spina bifida is the most common type that has a significant impact on a child's school performance. Infants with myelomeningocele spina bifida are born with part of the spinal cord protruding through the back into a sac containing spinal fluid. Babies born with this condition require surgery shortly after birth to remove the pouch of spinal fluid and place the spinal cord inside of the body. Children with spinal bifida may have a range of effects and needs; however, most are capable of fully participating in school and achieving as well as peers in academic areas. Below, you will find common effects (physical, medical, and learning) and accommodations for each type of effect.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS



Complex and Chronic Conditions:
Division for Physical, Health, and Multiple Disabilities

Accommodations to Meet Physical Needs:

- Arrange the classroom to be accommodating for students who use mobility devices such as crutches or wheelchairs
 - wider aisles
 - adaptive desks or chairs
 - easily accessible materials
 - visuals at height for viewing from wheelchair)
- Allow extra time between classes and/or allow to leave a bit early to avoid crowded halls
- Be mindful of scheduling to accommodate / avoid fatigue
- Arrange the classroom to accommodate specific visual difficulties (e.g., closer to board, seated on a specific side of the room)
- Provide notes (visual spatial issues make note-taking difficult)
- Allow technology use for lengthy written assignments

MEDICAL EFFECTS

- Decreased bladder and/or bowel control (often requires clean intermittent catheterization)
- Hydrocephalus (fluid build-up in brain usually treated with a shunt)
- Increased chance of seizure disorder
- Latex precautions / allergy

Accommodations to Meet Medical Needs:

- Ensure that the student has an individualized health plan and that all personnel who work with the student understand the plan
- Recognize medical precautions and what to do for each need
 - Symptoms of shunt failure (e.g., lethargy, headaches, vomiting, confusion)
 - Symptoms of bladder infection (student may not be able to feel effects such as burning, pressure in bladder)
 - Warning signs of seizures
 - Medication side effects
- Do not allow latex items (e.g., balloons, gloves) in the classroom
- Allow makeup work for time missed due to taking care of medical needs such as catheterization

LEARNING EFFECTS

- Decreased memory and attention
- Difficulty with organization
- Impulsive behaviors / decreased problem solving abilities
- Perceptual issues / sequencing difficulties
- Pragmatic language differences

Accommodations to Meet Learning Needs:

- Attention: repeated directions, highlight key points, teach attention strategies
- Memory: reminders, teach cognitive strategies (e.g., mnemonics)
- Organization: assignment notebook, teach organization strategies (e.g., color-coding)
- Math difficulties: adapted materials / assistive technology for teaching math concepts (e.g., manipulatives, visual aids such as fraction circles, tactile graphing chart, graphing calculator).
- Reading comprehension difficulties: graphic organizers, text-to-speech software/apps
- Impulsivity / problem solving / pragmatic language: explicitly teach desired behaviors (including communication) and problem-solving skills, behavior plan, differential reinforcement