



INCLUDING CHILDREN & YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

OVERALL DEFINITION

The Children's Trust Board of Directors defines **children with disabilities** as: Children who currently have a physical, emotional, developmental, behavioral, or chronic medical condition or delay. These children experience impairment in their sensory, cognitive, motor, emotional, or behavioral functioning, which requires support, ongoing intervention, or accommodation provided by others in order to participate in an age-appropriate fashion in education, social activity, or physical activity in an appropriate environment.

DEFINITIONS FOR SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

The Children's Trust uses the following categories to track different conditions experienced by children with disabilities that are expected to last for a year or more. When entering information into The Trust electronic reporting system, if you indicate that a child has a condition expected to last for a year or more, you must also select one or more of the following. Please indicate all that apply.

- **Developmental delay** (only if under age 5): Refers to an infant, toddler, or pre-school child whose development lags significantly behind established typical ranges for their age in areas that include speech/communication, self-help, cognitive, physical, social, and /or emotional development.
- **Intellectual/developmental disability** (over age 5): Refers to limitations for school-aged children and youth both in intellectual functioning and the ability to independently conduct daily living activities.
- **Learning disability** (over age 5): This involves a discrepancy for school-aged children and youth between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, and mathematical reasoning.
- **Autism spectrum disorder**: A general term widely used to refer to Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), which are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties with social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive behaviors or interests.
- **Deaf or hard of hearing**: A full or partial decrease in the ability to detect or understand sounds (sometimes referred to as hearing impairment).
- **Medical condition or illness**: An ongoing health condition that affects a child's ability to participate in at least one program activity. Examples include asthma, diabetes, epilepsy/seizures, severe allergies, sickle cell anemia, cystic fibrosis, cancer, and HIV/AIDS. Children with chronic medical conditions may be ill or well at any given time, but they are always living with the condition.
- **Physical disability or impairment**: Conditions that substantially limit one or more basic physical activity, such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying (for example cerebral palsy).
- **Managing aggression or temper**: Aggression is a form of behavior designed to hurt someone else, either emotionally or physically. It is often accompanied by quick or intense feelings of anger.
- **Managing attention and hyperactivity (ADHD)**: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is characterized by an individual having difficulty focusing on a task and maintaining concentration, being overly active, and/or having difficulty with impulse control.
- **Depression or anxiety**: Depression refers to a condition characterized by feelings of sadness, despair, and discouragement. Anxiety is characterized by nervousness, fear, apprehension, and worrying.
- **Speech or language condition**: Children with speech/language impairments experience difficulties that persist beyond early childhood in at least one of the following areas: speech or language processing, speech or language production, and language use.
- **Blind or low vision**: Limited or lack of ability to see visual images (sometimes referred to as visual impairment).



REPORTING & DATA ENTRY GUIDANCE RELATED TO DISABILITIES

INFORMATION TO BE COLLECTED AND REPORTED

The Annual Child/Youth Participant Information Form for use starting in 2025-2026 posted on The Trust website at <https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/partner/policies-forms/programmatic/> is intended to assist providers in collecting meaningful information about how to better serve children with disabilities in its funded programs directly serving children and youth. This includes information about a child's needs for extra assistance to fully participate in the program, current conditions expected to last a year or more, primary methods of communication, as well as specialized supports and services the child is currently receiving. This information is reported in The Trust's electronic reporting system along with other demographics.

HOW TO ENTER DATA IN TRUST CENTRAL PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

All the questions on the Annual Child/Youth Participant Information Form (shown on the right and available at the weblink above) must be entered into participant demographics within Trust Central for every child participant.

To support your child/youth's successful participation in this program, in what areas might they need extra assistance?

- ☐ Academic and learning supports, such as reading or understanding basic instructions
- ☐ Managing feelings and behavior, such as needing extra support or structure
- ☐ Chronic health condition management, such as using an epi pen, inhaler, or other medications
- ☐ Fine motor tasks, such as holding a crayon/pencil, writing, or using scissors
- ☐ Gross motor tasks, such as sports or physical activities like running
- ☐ Adapting activities to consider visual, speech, or hearing needs
- ☐ Using assistive device(s) like a wheelchair, crutches, brace, or walker
- ☐ Personal services, such as help with feeding, toileting, or changing clothes
- ☐ Other _____

☐ No specific help needed

If you noted any areas of extra assistance needed, please be sure to speak individually with the program staff about your child's needs and how the program can meet them.

What conditions does your child/youth have that are expected to last for a year or more? (mark all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental delay (only if under age 5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing aggression or temper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual/developmental disability (over age 5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing attention and hyperactivity (ADHD) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability (over age 5) | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression or anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autism spectrum disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech or language condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf or hard of hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Blind or low vision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical condition or illness (like asthma, diabetes, epilepsy/seizures, severe allergies) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <u>condition</u> lasting one year or more (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability or impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> No conditions lasting one year or more |

Do any of the conditions noted make it harder for your child/youth to do things that others of the same age can do?

- ☐ Yes, it is harder for them ☐ No, it is not harder for them ☐ N/A, no conditions noted

What are the main ways in which your child communicates? (mark all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speaks and is easily understood | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses gestures or expressions like pointing, pulling, smiling, frowning, or blinking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Speaks</u> but is difficult to understand | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses sounds that are not words like laughing, crying, or grunting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uses communication devices like pictures or a board | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uses sign language | |

What, if any, help does your child/youth receive at this time? (mark all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral therapy or services | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational therapy (OT) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling for emotional concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical therapy (PT) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily medication (not including vitamins) | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech/language therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional student education services in school through an IEP or 504 plan | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above are needed <u>at this time</u> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> At least one of these services <u>are</u> needed but not received |



HOW TO ENTER DATA IN TRUST CENTRAL PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS (continued)

Below are the disability-related child/youth participant demographic data entry fields in Trust Central. Select in each field the corresponding option indicated by the parent/guardian on the form.

To support your child/youth's successful participation in this program, in what areas might they need extra assistance? *

What conditions does your child/youth have that are expected to last for a year or more? *

What are the main ways in which your child communicates? *

What, if any, help does your child/youth receive at this time? *

If the parent/guardian selects the “Other” for any of the questions, please determine if the response fits into one of the standard response options using the definitions of conditions on the first page of this guidance. If needed, talk with the parent/guardian. Some conditions or needs may not match the form word-for-word but may still be the best fit based on category definitions.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION

The Children's Trust affirms that children and youth of all abilities should have the opportunity to participate fully in Trust-funded programming. The Trust recognizes that additional support and accommodation are often needed to serve children with disabilities. To address the needs of children and youth with disabilities, The Trust recommends some best practices for recruitment and activity delivery and provides the following options for modifying outcome measures: accommodation, modification, alternate assessment, and alternate outcome.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

A high-quality program communicates to the community that it is inclusive. It promotes inclusion through its marketing materials, website, and advocacy efforts.

- On your website, brochures, and other marketing materials, use images of children both with and without disabilities. Do the same with pictures you display onsite at your program.
- Use “We Include All Children” on a sign by your registration desk, on your website, and on other marketing materials. When making presentations about your program, be sure to let your audience know that all children are welcome.
- Meet with teachers, counselors, and principals at the schools in the vicinity of your program site and let them know that your program includes children and youth with disabilities.
- When addressing families, let them know that not only are their children welcome, but that you will work with them to address their specific needs or concerns.
- Make sure referral agencies (for example, 2-1-1 Helpline, the Advocacy Network on Disabilities, Parent to Parent of Miami, and others) know that all children are welcome at your program.



GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION (continued)

ACTIVITY DELIVERY

A high-quality program facilitates the participation of all children in the same activities, even if some participate in a different way. Accommodations must be individualized and based on formal or informal assessment.

- Use collateral information (review the Individual Education or 504 Accessibility Plan) to determine what accommodations may be needed and how you can best provide them.
- Ask the child's parents, and with their permission, ask teachers, therapists, and others who know the child.
- At registration, have parents complete the "[Getting to Know Me Form](#)", which provides valuable information about each child's likes, dislikes, strengths, and challenges.
- Contact your All Children Together (ACT) Inclusion Specialist for assistance at <https://www.advocacynetwork.org/services/act-resource-network/>.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

All children and youth should have the opportunity to participate fully in Trust-funded programs, including appropriate methods to capture their progress in the program. While certain outcome measures are required by contract, The Trust recognizes that the standard formats of some measures may not meet the needs of all participants. To address the needs of children and youth with disabilities, there are three options for modifying outcome measures: **accommodation**, **modification**, or **alternate assessment**. In some cases, **alternate outcomes** may be used. A child's disability category alone does not determine whether outcomes should be modified or what type might be needed. This should be based on the child's individual needs and abilities.

Accommodation

According to the U.S. and Florida Departments of Education, an **accommodation** is a **change to how** a child learns the material and demonstrates competence, but it **does not change** the level of difficulty or what is learned and measured. For example, a child with a writing disability may be allowed to verbally respond to a written assessment. This is an **accommodation** because the response to the measure is altered but the **level of difficulty is not changed**. Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations and should be individualized to the child's needs. Additional accommodation examples include:

- Testing setting adjustment, or allowing a child to take an assessment in a separate room or location
- Format alteration, such as a fewer number of items per page or larger text on the page
- Braille assessment
- Assistive devices for test administration, such as audio recording of the directions, pencil grips, securing papers to desks
- Assistive devices for child response, such as a computer or calculator

Modification

If a child cannot complete the assessment with an accommodation, a **modification** may be used. According to the U.S. and Florida Departments of Education, modifications **change** what is learned and measured, allowing for the level of difficulty to be adapted to meet the needs of the child. Modifications must be reviewed and approved in advance by The Children's Trust. Modification examples include:

- Allowing a child to match words with a definition rather than writing definitions
- Less questions on an assessment
- Simplified text passages

Entering Outcome Data for Modifications: Outcome measure modifications must be noted in SAMIS within the Performance Measure admin point, when applicable.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION (continued)

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES (continued)

Alternative Assessment & Outcomes

An **alternate assessment** is an outcome measure that is administered in place of the original outcome measure for children who are unable to respond to the original or adapted measure. An alternative assessment measures competency in the same outcome domain as contracted for other participants. For example, an alternative assessment for literacy includes using a literacy-related measure other than the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) or Maze.

An **alternate outcome** is used when the goal, outcome, and associated activity for a child is altered or changed. Alternate outcomes are requested when a participant cannot be measured appropriately with any accommodation, modification, or alternative assessment for a contracted outcome area.

Requesting an Alternate Assessment or Alternate Outcome

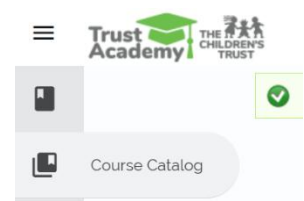
To include an alternative assessment in a contract, provider program staff should discuss it with their Trust **Program Manager and Research Analyst** during the contracting process or through a contract modification. This conversation must include:

- The specific measurement tool being proposed
- The contracted outcome it will assess
- How the alternative assessment aligns with the outcome and the activity being provided

Alternative assessments and alternative outcomes are only for children with significant cognitive or intellectual disabilities, according to the Every Student Succeeds Act. Almost all children and youth attending Trust youth development programs should be able to have their needs met using an accommodation or a modification.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To access live and online training options offered by the Advocacy Network on Disabilities and others, login to Trust Central and go to the Trust Academy Learning Management System (LMS). Click on the Course Catalog using the second tile down on the left (as shown here). Below the search bar, click to SHOW CATEGORIES and select Including Children with Disabilities.



For more information specifically about Trust contracting requirements, complete this Trust Academy course: Understanding The Children's Trusts Guidelines for Including Children with Disabilities <https://collabornation.net/course/20050>.

To find additional resources for families of children and youth with disabilities, go to <https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/content/Programmatic> and click on Children with Disabilities and other Priority Populations; then click the Resources link.