

**SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE**  
**April 2001**

"*Serious emotional disturbance*" (*SED*) means with respect to a youth between the ages of 6 and 17 years that the youth meets the requirements of (a), and either (b) or (c).

- (a) The youth has been determined by a licensed mental health professional as having a mental disorder with a primary diagnosis falling within one of the following DSM-IV (or successor) classifications when applied to the youth's current presentation (current means within the past 12 calendar months unless otherwise specified in the DSM-IV) and the diagnosis has a severity specifier of moderate or severe:
- (i) childhood schizophrenia (295.10, 295.20, 295.30, 295.60, 295.90);
  - (ii) oppositional defiant disorder (313.81);
  - (iii) autistic disorder (299.00);
  - (iv) pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (299.80);
  - (v) Asperger's disorder (299.80);
  - (vi) separation anxiety disorder (309.21);
  - (vii) reactive attachment disorder of infancy or early childhood (313.89);
  - (viii) schizo affective disorder (295.70);
  - (ix) mood disorders (296.0x, 296.2x, 296.3x, 296.4x, 296.5x, 296.6x, 296.7, 296.80, 296.89);
  - (x) obsessive-compulsive disorder (300.3);
  - (xi) dysthymic disorder (300.4);
  - (xii) cyclothymic disorder (301.13);
  - (xiii) generalized anxiety disorder (overanxious disorder) (300.02);
  - (xiv) posttraumatic stress disorder (chronic) (309.81);
  - (xv) dissociative identity disorder (300.14);
  - (xvi) sexual and gender identity disorder (302.2, 302.3, 302.4, 302.6, 302.82, 302.83, 302.84, 302.85, 302.89);
  - (xvii) anorexia nervosa (severe) (307.1);
  - (xviii) bulimia nervosa (severe) (307.51);
  - (xix) intermittent explosive disorder (312.34); and
  - (xx) attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (314.00, 314.01, 314.9) when accompanied by at least one of the diagnoses listed above.
- (b) As a result of the youth's diagnosis determined in (a) and for a period of at least 6 months, or for a predictable period over 6 months, the youth consistently and persistently demonstrates behavioral abnormality in two or more spheres, to a significant degree, well outside normative developmental expectations, that cannot be attributed to intellectual, sensory, or health factors:
- (i) has failed to establish or maintain developmentally and culturally appropriate relationships with adult caregivers or authority figures;
  - (ii) has failed to demonstrate or maintain developmentally and culturally appropriate peer relationships;
  - (iii) has failed to demonstrate a developmentally appropriate range and expression of emotion or mood;
  - (iv) has displayed disruptive behavior sufficient to lead to isolation in or from school, home, therapeutic or recreation settings;

- (v) has displayed behavior that is seriously detrimental to the youth's growth, development, safety or welfare, or to the safety or welfare of others; or
  - (vi) has displayed behavior resulting in substantial documented disruption to the family including, but not limited to, adverse impact on the ability of family members to secure or maintain gainful employment.
- (c) In addition to mental health services, the youth demonstrates a need for specialized services from at least one of the following human service systems during the previous six months:
- (i) education services, due to the diagnosis determined in (a), as evidenced by identification as a child with a disability as defined in 20-7-401(4), MCA with respect to which the youth is currently receiving special education services;
  - (ii) child protective services as evidenced by temporary investigative authority, or temporary or permanent legal custody;
  - (iii) the juvenile correctional system, due to the diagnosis determined in (a), as evidenced by a youth court consent adjustment or consent decree or youth court adjudication; or
  - (iv) current alcohol/drug abuse or addiction services as evidenced by participation in treatment through a state-approved program or with a certified chemical dependency counselor.
- (d) Serious emotional disturbance (SED) with respect to a youth under six years of age means the youth exhibits a severe behavioral abnormality that cannot be attributed to intellectual, sensory, or health factors and that results in substantial impairment in functioning for a period of at least 6 months or is predicted to continue for a period of at least 6 months, as manifested by one or more of the following:
- (i) atypical, disruptive or dangerous behavior which is aggressive or self-injurious;
  - (ii) atypical emotional responses which interfere with the child's functioning, such as an inability to communicate emotional needs and to tolerate normal frustrations;
  - (iii) atypical thinking patterns which, considering age and developmental expectations, are bizarre, violent or hypersexual;
  - (iv) lack of positive interests in adults and peers or a failure to initiate or respond to most social interaction;
  - (v) indiscriminate sociability (e.g., excessive familiarity with strangers) that results in a risk of personal safety of the child; or
  - (vi) inappropriate and extreme fearfulness or other distress which does not respond to comfort by caregivers.