

Behaviors Associated with Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD) may be due to Speech-Language Impairment (SLI)

A child's language deficits may be misperceived as...

- inattention
- noncompliance
- deliberate dishonesty
- disrespect/defiance

Additionally, a child with severe receptive language deficits may present with inappropriate behaviors because they do not understand what is expected of them.

What can you do to help?

- Spread the word! Talk with intervention specialists, special education and gen education teachers and administrators about the relationship between EBD and SLI.
- Consider language screening in planning interventions or evaluations for EBD.

Questions?

mnsha.org

office@mnsha.org



Emotional Behavioral Disorder and Speech-Language Impairment: What You May Not Know...

Almost 50% of children labeled as EBD also have a moderate to severe Language Impairment.

A review of 22 studies found that among 1,171 children ages 5–13 formally identified as EBD with no history of other disabilities:

- 81% had below average language skills.
- 47% had a moderate to severe language impairment (defined as ≥ 2 STD below the mean on standardized assessments).

Hollo, A.; Wehby, J.; Oliver, R. Unidentified Language and Behavioral Disorders: A Meta- Analysis. (2014) Counsel for Exceptional Children Vol. 80, No. 2, pp. 169-186.

In a study of 46 students labeled EBD, those with high internalizing scores had higher language scores than students with elevated externalizing or both elevated externalizing and internalizing scores. Students in all groups had lower pragmatics scores.

Hollo A, Chow JC, Wehby JH. Profiles of Language and Behavior in Students With Emotional Disturbance. *Behavioral Disorders*. 2019;44(4):195-204.

“The consequences of an undiagnosed language disorder can be devastating.”

SLI is likely to be overlooked in school-age children with EBD.

- Language deficits impact behavior and social-emotional development in students identified with EBD.
- “Implications include the need to train school professionals to recognize communication deficits.”
- “...it is critically important that specialists collaborate to provide linguistic and behavioral support for students with EBD and [S]LI.”

Hollo, A.; Language and Behavior Disorders in School- Age Children: Comorbidity and Communication in the Classroom SIG 16 Perspectives on School-Based Issues, December 2012, Vol. 13, 111-119.

SLI children are twice as likely to show disorder levels of overall externalizing and internalizing EBD and ADHD issues.

Yew SG, O’Kearney R. Emotional and behavioural outcomes later in childhood and adolescence for children with specific language impairments: meta-analyses of controlled prospective studies. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry*. 2013 May;54(5):516-24.

Teacher ratings underestimate a student’s language risk.

A preliminary study of students with EBD found “low agreement between direct assessment and teacher ratings of language, and that measures of language varied relative to behavioral profiles.”

- Teachers identified only 46% of students with a language risk.
- “These findings are consistent with prior research indicating that unidentified language impairment is highly prevalent in students.”

Chow JC, Hollo A. Language Ability of Students With Emotional Disturbance: Discrepancies Between Teacher Ratings and Direct Assessment. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*. 2018;43(2):90-95.