Concepts addressed in this course: *Areas of exceptionality in students’ learning: developmental delays*

**Students should refer to:**

**Specifically, students should review:**

I. Definition of developmental delay  
   a. Intellectual growth does not follow the expected rate of cognitive development because of genetic or environmental conditions  
   b. Difficult to identify mild cognitive delays, severe delays are readily identifiable

II. IDEA 1997 option to use term, developmental delay, for children birth through age nine as an eligibility guideline for funding

III. Label covers a wide variety of other disorders which may be identified at a later time point (like autism, mental retardation, ADHD, etc)

IV. Definition of pervasive developmental disorders (PDD)  
   a. Includes autism and autistic spectrum disorders, Asperger’s syndrome, Rett’s syndrome, and childhood disintegrative disorder  
   b. Difficulty with cognitive development at an expected rate  
   c. Difficulty with communicative skills or social interaction skills

V. Causes of PDD  
   a. Genetic – several chromosomal abnormalities on chromosome 7, 13, and 15 have been identified  
      i. Autism – larger brains which are heavier in each lobe - limbic system has reduced neuron size, shorter brain stem – appears to be missing a band of tissue  
      ii. PDD – typical volume of white matter in brain (connections) but smaller amounts of gray matter (neuron bodies) - elevated neurotransmitters (serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine)  
   b. Environmental influences, but not a clear pathway

VI. Characteristics of children who have PDD  
   a. Little to no social reciprocity (peer relationships)  
   b. Impaired communication skills  
   c. Displaying stereotypical behavior

**Helpful websites include:**

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