

# 2025 North Carolina Brain Injury Conference

## Supporting Students with Pediatric Brain Injuries:

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### Brain Injury Conference

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Lumina on  
Wrightsville Beach



**BRAIN INJURY  
ASSOCIATION**  
OF NORTH CAROLINA

# Objectives

- Examine the distinctions between federal, state, and school-based definitions
- Describe how brain injuries may manifest in academic settings
- Describe the supports available within the public school system.

# TBI Definition: BIAA

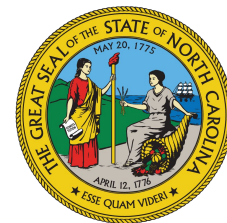


A traumatic brain injury occurs **when brain function is altered by an external force**. This happens when something strikes the head or when the head hits something as the result of a fall, motor vehicle accident, assault, and more. There are many different causes of TBI and several different types.

# TBI Definition: IDEA

Traumatic brain injury means an **acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force**, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Traumatic brain injury applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. **Traumatic brain injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.**





NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
Disability Determination Services

# TBI Definition: North Carolina

Traumatic brain injury - **An injury to the brain caused by an external physical force** resulting in total or partial functional disability, psychosocial impairment, or both, and meets all of the following criteria:

- A. Involves an open or closed head injury.
- B. Resulted from a single event, or resulted from a series of events which may include multiple concussions.
- C. Occurs with or without a loss of consciousness at the time of injury.
- D. Results in impairments in one or more areas of the following functions: cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech.
- E. Does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative.**

(NC Session Law 2019-240, page 41)

# TBI Definition: NC DPI (Office of Exceptional Children)

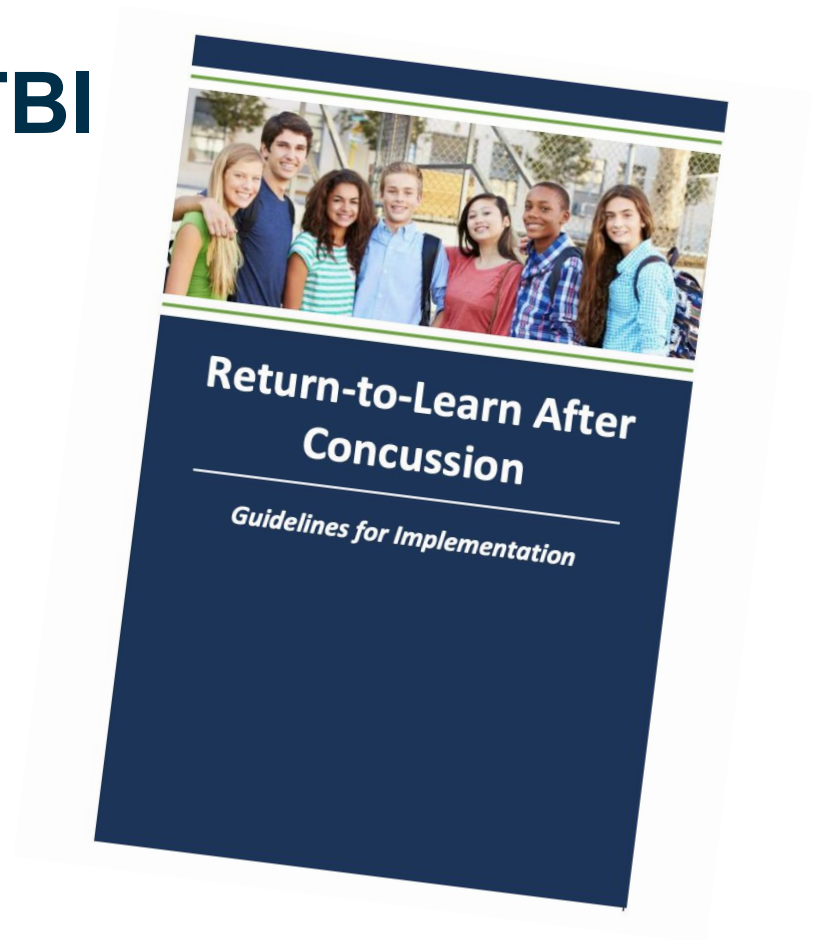
Traumatic brain injury means an **acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or by an internal occurrence** resulting in total or partial functional disability and/or psychosocial impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Causes may include but are not limited to, open or closed head injuries, cerebrovascular accidents (e.g., stroke, aneurysm), infections, kidney or heart failure, electric shock, anoxia, tumors, metabolic disorders, toxic substances, or medical or surgical treatments. The brain injury can occur in a single event or can result from a series of events (e.g., multiple concussions). Traumatic brain injury also can occur with or without a loss of consciousness at the time of injury. Traumatic brain injury may result in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. **Traumatic brain injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative but can include brain injuries induced by birth trauma.** ([NC Policies..., Page 8](#))

# TBI manifestations in school

Physical	Neurocognitive	Social / Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Motor</li><li>• Vision</li><li>• Speech</li><li>• Headaches</li><li>• Seizures</li><li>• Medication side effects</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decline in cognitive processing</li><li>• Slowed response time</li><li>• Attention/ Concentration</li><li>• Language or visual</li><li>• Memory and new learning</li><li>• Executive Functioning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secondary problems</li><li>• Substance use</li><li>• Too much too soon</li><li>• Unrealistic predictions</li><li>• Malingering</li></ul>

# Support in School: mTBI

1. Guidelines for Removal
2. Notification Procedures
3. Medical Care Updates
4. Return-to-Learn/Play Requirements





# Support in School: Section 504

- Schools **cannot exclude** a student or deny participation in educational activities due to their brain injury.
- Can provide accommodations for
  - a. Classroom support
  - b. medical/physical needs
  - c. Social and emotional support
  - d. Transition considerations



# **Support in School: IDEA**

## **TBI is a distinct eligibility category**

- NC's expanded definition casts a wider TBI net

## **Registry of approved providers**

- Specialized training required for all TBI IDEA evaluations

## **Data monitoring**

- Child count trends