

## **Most Significant Cognitive Disability Definition**

The term “significant cognitive disability” is not a separate category of disability. It is a designation given to a small number of students with disabilities for purposes of their participation in the statewide student alternate assessment program who are (1) within one or more of the existing categories of disability under the IDEA and (2) whose cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with systematic instruction.

For a student to be determined as having a most significant cognitive disability for the purpose of participation in the alternate assessment system, the IEP team must consider all of the following guidelines when determining the appropriateness of a curriculum based on Nebraska College and Career Ready Academic Standards with Extended Indicators and the use of the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System - Alternate Assessment. (NSCAS – AA)

- **The student requires extensive, pervasive, and frequent supports in order to acquire, maintain, and demonstrate performance of knowledge and skills.**
- **The student’s cognitive functioning is significantly below age expectations and has an impact on his/her ability to function in multiple environments (school, home and community).**
- **The student’s demonstrated cognitive ability and adaptive functioning prevent completion of the general academic curriculum, even with appropriately designed and implemented modifications and accommodations. (\* Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.)**
- **The student’s curriculum and instruction is aligned to the Nebraska College and Career Ready Academic Standards with Extended Indicators.**
- **The student may have accompanying communication, motor, sensory, or other impairments.**