



504 & THE RIGHT TO A FAIR AND EQUAL EDUCATION

If a student's symptoms are affecting their learning, consider initiating a 504 plan. Common accommodations for EDS students include:

- Extra time on written work
- Modified PE participation
- Flexible seating
- Permission to visit the nurse as needed
- A second set of books kept at school

A doctor's note is a valid first step — you don't need a formal diagnosis to begin the process.

If a student concerns you, talk to the school nurse. You don't need a diagnosis to ask for a 504 plan — you just need to advocate for them.

CONSIDERATIONS

These conditions exist on a spectrum. Some students will be severely symptomatic while others will be more mild. This is just something to be aware of.

There are higher rates of neurodivergence in students with EDS, including autism, ADHD, OCD, and learning disorders.

Be alert to signs of social withdrawal in children, such as avoiding recess or not wanting to attend school.

RESOURCES



Blossom
Autism & Family Collective



The Norris Lab

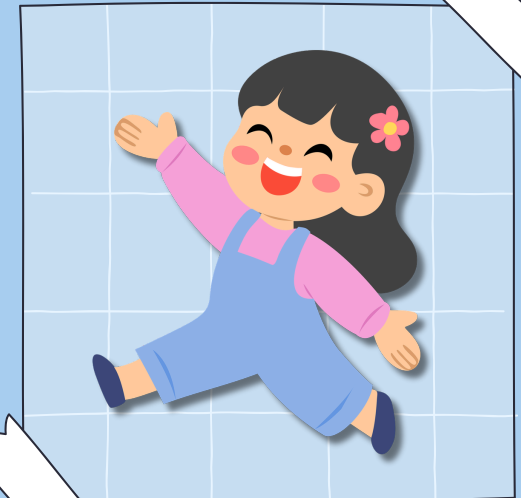


Elevate RARE

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DOES THIS STUDENT NEED SUPPORT?

Guide to Recognizing Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome or Connective Tissue Conditions in Young Students



For K-8 Teachers, Aides, and School Staff

The Norris Lab | TCAPP

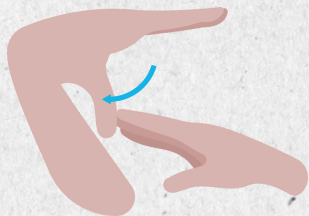
WHAT IS A CONNECTIVE TISSUE DISORDER?

THE BASICS

Connective tissue is the "glue" holding the body together — joints, skin, ligaments, blood vessels. In students with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS) or other connective tissue disorders (CTD), this tissue is more fragile than normal, meaning everyday activities like writing or walking between classes can cause pain, injury, and fatigue.

HOW COMMON IS IT?

EDS is more common than you think, particularly the hypermobile subtype which affects an estimated 1 in 500 people — many undiagnosed. You have likely already taught many students with this condition.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

Students with EDS are often hiding within plain sight!

- Frequent trips to the nurse or bathroom

- Difficulty writing or gripping things

- Easy or excessive bruising

- Fatigue that doesn't match activity level or after exertion

- Disturbance/headaches from bright lights

- Frequent injury and illness

- Allergies or skin flushing

- Sitting in abnormal or contorted positions

- Avoidance of PE or physical activity

- Brain fog and difficulty concentrating

- Low muscle tone

- Difficulty carrying textbooks

- Flagged in scoliosis screening

- Motor development delay

- Chronic pain

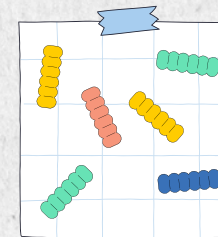
- Poor posture and coordination

- Irritability due to inability to accurately communicate pain

HOW TO SUPPORT

EDS and other connective tissue conditions can be dynamic disabilities that are often invisible!

IN CLASS



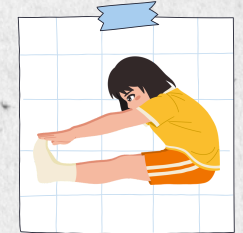
Let them use a pencil grip or take breaks from writing.

Allow them to sit up front, on the floor, stand, or shift positions. Keep a spare textbook in the classroom so they don't carry heavy bags.

Never force participation in activities that cause pain.

Let them sit out without penalty. Avoid praising extreme flexibility — it may look impressive but can cause injury.

IN PE CLASS



Because EDS flare-ups can cause frequent absences, a support teacher could offer could be keeping a folder of missed assignments readily available and have a catch-up plan in place — for example, assigning a peer to help the student stay on track.

