



Congenital Brain Injury and Acquired Brain Injury

Congenital brain injuries occur before or during birth (genetic, infections, or developmental issues in the womb).

Acquired Brain Injury occurs after birth, resulting from trauma, infection, stroke, or lack of oxygen.

Congenital Brain Injury

(In Womb/At Birth)

Brain damage that occurs while a baby is in the womb or during the birthing process.

Causes

Genetic Factors
Prenatal Infections
Exposure to
drugs/alcohol/toxins
Maternal Malnutrition
Birth Trauma (lack of
oxygen).

Examples

Some cases of cerebral palsy,
congenital infections,
developmental brain anomalies,
FASD, and NAS.

Impact

Affects the brain as it is forming.

Acquired Brain Injury

(Post-Birth)

Damage to the brain that occurs after birth and is not hereditary, congenital, or degenerative. In education, this is Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Causes

External Force
Accidents/Falls

Tumors

Infections (Meningitis)

Oxygen Deprivation

Examples

Concussion, Strokes, Traumatic
Accidents.

Impact

Damages already developed brain
tissue.

Key Distinctions

Congenital is often related to development.

Acquired is related to sudden damage or disease.

While both can have lasting effects, the developing brain (congenital) may reorganize differently than an adult brain (acquired).

Learn More [Here](#).



Signs and Symptoms

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional
Headache Nausea Fatigue Dizziness Problems with balance Visual disturbance Sensory symptoms (ringing in ears, loss of taste or smell) Sensitivity to light or noise	Loss of consciousness Disorientation Memory problems Reduced attention and concentration Slowed processing speed Reduced reaction time Feeling foggy Repeating questions	Depression or sadness Anxiety or nervousness Personality change Mood swings/emotional lability Irritability Showing less interest in previously enjoyed activities

School Accommodations

Focus on reducing cognitive load, managing fatigue, and providing structural support through IEPs or 504 plans.

Examples

Extra time
Frequent breaks
Reduced workload
Preferential seating
Access to peer notes or recordings.
Counseling

Learn More at
[Brain Injury Alliance NJ](#)
[Traumatic Brain Injury Fund of NJ](#).

