

Educators Handout to Understanding the Effects of Seizures (Epilepsy) on Student Learning.

Epilepsy-related school difficulties may be the result of multiple factors including frequency and duration of seizures, absenteeism, and the effects of anti-epileptic medications. This makes learning new information difficult because the child loses a sense of continuity of classroom activity.

Daytime seizures can affect learning by reducing alertness and interfering with short-term information storage and abstraction. Frequent and uncontrolled seizures impair learning new information due to the amount of time that the individual is unaware of the environment. Nighttime seizures can disrupt the consolidation of memory and affect language functions.

One of the most notable effects on cognitive functioning in children with epilepsy is memory impairment. This impairment can range from poor concentration and minor forgetfulness to gross clouding of consciousness and disorientation.

Anticonvulsant medications have been associated with fatigue, learning difficulty, behavior changes, and memory impairments. Almost all anti-epileptic medications have some adverse effects on cognition, learning, and mood.