

Policies, Practices, and Procedures for Identification of Students with a Suspected Disability

Overview

Both Federal and State law has set forth appropriate measure and procedures for the identification process for students suspected of a disability. Local Educational Agencies must adhere to these policies and incorporate their own measures to ensure the appropriate identification of students with disabilities.

Policies

School-Wide Approaches and Pre-referral Interventions

- The ALCS BOE has policies in place (po2623) that ensures the achievement needs of all students will be assessed and that academic intervention services
- The district will use of screening tools and other benchmarking/ curriculum-based assessments to identify students who may need additional supports.
- The participation in an intervention plan cannot be used to unnecessarily delay an evaluation for special education

Referral for Special Education

- A referral for evaluation can come from teachers, parents, or other professionals who observe significant academic, functional, emotional or behavioral challenges that impact the student's academic performance. Refer to the Ohio Department of Education's guide through the Evaluation Process for children ages 3-21

Evaluation For Special Education

- The district adopts and uses the ODEW Special Education Model Policies and Procedures to ensure initial evaluations are conducted and reevaluations completed in accordance to all laws and policies.

Parents Rights and Procedural Safeguards

- Annually, each parent will receive access to the ODEW document "A Guide to Parents Rights in Special Education"

Procedures and Practices

Interventions and Support

- Building MTSS teams will review identified lists and develop evidence-based plans of intervention and follow up reviews. Teams will follow the MTSS plans and tiered pathways of support and intervention strategies.

Evaluation Process

1. Referral: Either a parent of a child or an educational agency may initiate a request for an initial evaluation to determine if the child is a child with a disability. The district will, within 30 days of receipt of a request for an evaluation, either obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation or provide to the parent a prior written notice stating that the educational agency does not suspect a disability and will not conduct an evaluation.
2. Evaluation Planning and Team: As part of the initial evaluation, and as part of any reevaluation, the evaluation team shall complete the evaluation planning form which guides the evaluation process. A group of qualified professionals and the parent of the child determines whether the child is a child with a disability, and the education needs of the child.
3. Evaluation: In conducting the evaluation, the educational agency must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability as described in the definition section of the Operating Standards and determine the child's special education and related services, that enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum (or for a preschool child to participate in appropriate activities). The district must use more than a single source of information as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child and use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive, behavioral, physical or developmental factors.
4. Eligibility Determination: Upon completion of the administration of assessments and other evaluation measures, the ETR team, which must consist of a parent, district representative, qualified examiner, general education teacher and intervention specialist, reviews all assessment data to determine if the student meets the criteria for one of the special education eligibility categories. This includes evaluating if the student's needs adversely affect their educational performance, despite interventions provided through the MTSS framework. The educational agency provides a copy of the evaluation team report (documentation of determination of eligibility) prior to the next IEP meeting and in no case later than 14 days from the date of eligibility determination; and at no cost to the parent.

Compliance and Monitoring

ALCS refers to the following factors along with an ALCS ETR Checklist (attached) to monitor compliance of evaluations.

A Compliant ETR contains necessary evidence and is located in all essential areas:

1. Evidence of interventions to resolve concerns for any child who is performing below grade-level standards in the following sections of the evaluation:
 - Referral (applicable for initial evaluations)
 - Data from Interventions within the Part 1
 - Summary Part 2



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2. Evidence of parental involvement; OR Evidence the parent was provided opportunities to participate in the ETR planning process. If transfer ETR, adopting educational agency documentation of parent involvement in the ETR planning."

3. Evidence that the evaluation addressed all areas related to the suspected disability as noted on the planning form:

- The evaluation comprehensively addressed all areas related to the suspected disability, as documented on the planning form.

4. Procedures for evaluating Specific Learning Disabilities, Multiple Disabilities, Blind/Visual Impairment, Deafness or Hearing Impairment, and preschool-age children:

- The evaluation followed the appropriate procedures for the specific disability or age group, as required.

5. Use of multiple sources of information to determine eligibility:

- The eligibility determination was based on multiple sources of information, providing a comprehensive understanding of the student's needs.

6. The Evaluation Team Report (ETR) provides a comprehensive summary of all assessment results in clear, jargon-free language that is easily understandable to the parents.

- The report explains the assessment findings in a way that allows the parents to fully understand their child's strengths, needs, and the implications for educational programming.
- The language used in the ETR is accessible and tailored to the parents' level of understanding, ensuring they can actively participate in the decision-making process.

7. The Evaluation Team Report (ETR) provides a comprehensive and detailed description of the student's educational needs, clearly outlining the areas where the student requires support and intervention.

- The description of educational needs is directly linked to the assessment results, allowing the IEP team to develop specific, measurable, and achievable goals that address the student's identified areas of need.
- The ETR includes clear explanations of how the student's needs impact their ability to access the general education curriculum, enabling the IEP team to design effective and actionable goals to support the student's academic and functional progress.

8. For initial evaluations, a group of qualified professionals, including the parent of the child, determines whether the child is a child with a disability. This group consisted of:

- The child's general education teacher
- A person qualified to conduct individual assessments and interpret the results, such as a School Psychologist
- An educational agency representative
- If determining a specific learning disability (SLD), the group also included:
- The child's general education teacher (or a general education teacher qualified to teach a child of the same age if the child does not have a general education teacher)
- At least one person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations of children, such as a school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, or remedial reading teacher
- When appropriate, the child

For reevaluations, the group of qualified professionals determining eligibility included:

- The parent
- The child's general education teacher
- The child's special education teacher
- An educational agency representative
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results
- At the discretion of the parent or the school educational agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate and whenever appropriate, the child with a disability.

9. The Evaluation Team Report (ETR) provides a comprehensive and well-reasoned justification for the eligibility determination decision.

- The justification clearly explains how the evaluation data, including information from multiple sources, supports the team's conclusion about the child's eligibility or non-eligibility for special education services.
- The justification is presented in a clear and logical manner, allowing the reader to understand the rationale behind the decision and how it aligns with the applicable laws and regulations. - The justification includes specific details and references to the assessment results, ensuring a transparent and well-documented decision-making process.

Children Who Transfer in From an Ohio School

ALCS, within 30 days from the date evaluation was received, will either:

- Accept the evaluation from the prior school, or
- Obtain consent for a reevaluation. A reevaluation under this section must be conducted within 60 days of parent consent.



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Children Who Transfer in From Another State

ALCS will review all documents (ETR, IEP) to check for compliance with all Federal and State laws and determine:

- Accept the evaluation from the prior school, or
- Obtain consent for a reevaluation. A reevaluation under this section must be conducted within 60 days of parent consent.