



Tips for Special Education Directors from OSCAS

OSCAS “Tips” are offered to support local education agencies in their efforts to ensure special education compliance. Tips serve as easy-to-reference reminders of existing regulatory requirements and are not intended as supplementary guidance.

Topic: Planning a Full and Individual Evaluation

Be sure that your special education policies, procedures and practices for planning evaluations and reevaluations align to the most current state and federal regulations. It must be a **team discussion** that drives a full and individual evaluation plan. Evaluations should be comprehensive but also individual, and a team may choose from a variety of evaluation methods and tools when creating an evaluation plan. There is **no regulatory requirement to apply the same battery of measures** to every initial evaluation or to every reevaluation. By definition, an evaluation is not simply a list of tests but rather a set of individually-selected procedures that provide solid information to help the team to determine the presence of a disability and need for special education and related services. To select or design the procedures needed for eligibility determination, the team should first consider data and information currently available, and then decide what additional information is necessary to determine whether the child has a disability and is in need of special education. Teams should plan evaluations that are sufficiently comprehensive to enable the team to consider individual factors such as sensory, manual, or speaking skills, language proficiency, or cultural considerations which may impact the methods used to assess the child as well as to identify all of the child’s special education and related service needs.

Tools

Some district procedures include tools to help guide team discussions when developing evaluation plans. One tool that has emerged as an effective tool is the ICEL/RIOT framework which is a matrix used to consider ways to document data and information related to the Instruction, Curriculum, Environment, and Learner through Review, Interview, Observation, and Testing. The intent of this form is not to require that the team fill out the 16 boxes of the 4x4 matrix or provide assessments or data to fit in every section; the intent is to guide the team in considering the types of information available through Review, Interview, Observation, and Testing that can support development of full and individual evaluation plans. To learn more about ICEL/RIOT, go to: http://www.interventioncentral.org/sites/default/files/rti_riot_ice_l_data_collection.pdf

Another tool available is a checklist of common evaluations used, by disability category. The checklist is not a list of **required** evaluations, and also is **not exhaustive**; but it may be helpful in team discussions. Evaluations are not limited to tests or assessments and can represent data from various sources. It is entirely possible that two children may be found eligible for the same disability category but have full and individual evaluations that differ in the types and range of methods and data collected.

Please see reverse side.

300.15 Evaluation.

Evaluation means procedures used in accordance with §§ 300.304 through 300.311 to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs.

Evaluations and Reevaluations

300.301 Initial evaluations.

(a) *General.* Each public agency must conduct a full and individual initial evaluation, in accordance with §§ 300.305 and 300.306, before the initial provision of special education and related services to a child with a disability under this part.

300.304 Evaluation procedures.

(b) *Conduct of evaluation.* In conducting the evaluation, the public agency must —

(1) 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 —

(i) Whether the child is a child with a disability under § 300.8; and

(ii) The content of the child’s IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities);

(2) Not use any single measure or assessment 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

(3) Use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.

(c) *Other evaluation procedures.* Each public agency must ensure that— ...

(2) Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

...

(4) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities;

...

(6) In evaluating each child with a disability under §§ 300.304 through 300.306, the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child’s special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified.

(7) Assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child are provided.

300.305 Additional requirements for evaluations and reevaluations.

(a) *Review of existing evaluation data.* As part of an initial evaluation (if appropriate) and as part of any reevaluation under this part, the IEP Team and other qualified professionals must —

(1) Review existing evaluation data on the child, including —

(i) Evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child;

(ii) Current classroom-based, local, or state assessments and classroom-based observations; and (iii) Observations by teachers and related services providers; and

(2) On the basis of that review, and input from the child’s parents, identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine —

(i)(A) Whether the child is a child with a disability, as defined by § 300.8, and the educational needs of the child; or (B) In case of a reevaluation of a child, whether the child continues to have such a disability, and the educational needs of the child . . .