

FAQs re: EL and SPED

Is a school or school district required to secure parental consent in order to evaluate a learner for ESOL services?

- No. School personnel may proceed with such an assessment, if they believe a learner might be eligible for ESOL services.

Is a school or school district required to secure parental consent in order to evaluate a learner for special education services?

- Yes! School personnel must secure written consent from a learner's parents / guardians before beginning an evaluation for *initial* provision of SPED services. (Only written notice to parents / guardians is required for SPED re-evaluation.)

May an individual learner receive both ESOL and SPED services at the same time?

- Yes. A learner found to be eligible may receive services from licensed service providers in both of these two areas of specialization.

If an ESOL teacher provides services to a learner who also receives special education services, is he / she required to be a member of the learner's IEP team?

- No. The ESOL teacher is not required to be a member of the IEP team, although this is definitely recommended as best practice!

IF an ESOL teacher provides services to a learner whom he / she suspects might, also, experience a disability, is there a required period of time the teacher must wait before making the referral for SPED evaluation?

- No. The ESOL teacher should refer such a learner for evaluation for eligibility for SPED services, as soon as a possible disability is suspected.

Is it the responsibility of a school psychologist or special education teacher to evaluate an English Language Learner for possible eligibility for special education services?

- Although a school psychologist *and* special education teacher should participate in the EL's evaluation for SPED eligibility (once written consent is secured), the assessment process should not be their sole responsibility. The ESOL teacher should definitely be a member of the evaluation team, as well as other related service providers (e.g., speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, social worker, adaptive PE teacher, school nurse, etc.) as deemed pertinent to an individual learner's possible needs. The assessment process for SPED eligibility determination must be multidisciplinary.

Which test(s) should be utilized to evaluate an English Language Learner for possible eligibility for special education services?

- No *single, formal, norm-referenced* assessment is available to address this particular need. Currently, there exists a noticeable absence of standardized assessments, which are culturally and linguistically appropriate for and normed with ELs.

If a standardized, norm-referenced assessment is available in the learner's L1, may this test be utilized in the evaluation process?

- Yes—if the test has been normed in a learner's language (i.e., L1), it may be utilized as one component of the multidisciplinary assessment process, which is required for special education eligibility determination. Determination of eligibility for special education for *all* learners, including ELs, may not be based solely on one single test (i.e., an IQ test). [A Spanish version of the full Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children is commercially available.]

If a standardized, norm-referenced assessment is NOT available in the learner's L1, may an English version of the norm-referenced assessment be translated for use in the evaluation process?

- No! Formal testing instruments may not be translated into the learner's L1; such a practice would violate ALL aspects of the assessment's validity.

What should be the focus of the evaluation of an English Language Learner for possible eligibility for special education services?

- The focus should not be any particular measure(s). It is much more important to focus on keen observation of the learner's overt behaviors and the evaluation *process*. Although there will always be exceptions to the effectiveness of this process, this approach should prove to be effective with the vast majority of ELs being evaluated for possible SPED services.