



Position Statement

PERIODIC REEVALUATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is committed to promoting standards of best practice in conducting periodic reevaluations of students in special education programs, as well as supporting compliance with the requirements of the most recent reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). NASP supports, and federal regulations allow, a flexible approach to reevaluations based on the unique needs of the student and the specific questions that need to be answered. The reevaluation is an opportunity to critically examine the current educational environment and to evaluate student progress, instructional needs, the least restrictive environment, and long-term goals. This process requires the collaborative involvement of the multidisciplinary team, including teachers, the family, and the student.

DEVELOPING A REEVALUATION PLAN

Federal guidelines and professional standards call for meaningful, individualized, multifaceted reevaluations that serve the best interests of students. The purposes and specific questions for reevaluation should guide the selection of assessment methods and instruments. Three broad purposes of reevaluation are:

1. **Accountability.** The effectiveness of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) should be analyzed. Reevaluations should include a review of progress by examining data reflecting past and present levels of performance. Data may include grades, school discipline records, curriculum-based measures (CBM), and norm-based measures. Lack of progress should stimulate changes in the IEP regarding curriculum, instructional techniques, behavioral strategies, the educational environment, or a reassessment of the nature of the disability.
2. **Planning.** Assessment information should be used to determine whether modifications to the special education services are needed for the child to meet the annual goals and participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum. Factors such as behavior, current academic skills, and communication skills as compared with regular education peers should be considered. Future needs must be addressed, especially at transition points in the child's educational program. Transition planning might address confirmation of disability, community living skills, vocational training, and/or plans for postsecondary education. Further, planning should address any necessary and appropriate accommodations to allow the student to participate in state and district assessments as well as in general education instruction and activities.
3. **Qualification.** Under IDEA it is assumed that the initial identification of an educational disability and qualification for special education services are valid processes. However, when the initial eligibility determination occurred at a very young age, or when academic experiences were very limited, or when specific developmental delays may have prevented long-term prediction of educational needs, the reevaluation provides an opportunity to reconsider the presence and

nature of the disability. When the initial identification and qualification otherwise met standards of reliability and validity, the emphasis of reevaluation usually will not be to reconfirm eligibility, but to gauge the effectiveness of current services and determine future programming needs. IDEA clearly indicates that additional formal assessments to reconfirm the disability are not required unless a change in disability is suspected or the parent requests assessment in specific areas of development. An evaluation must be conducted, however, before determining that a child no longer has a disability that requires special education support. If, at the time of the reevaluation, the student's progress suggests that he or she may no longer have a disability requiring special education, the assessment should address the student's needs and programming in order to succeed in the general education program. In reviewing existing data to determine the components of the reevaluation for the individual student, parental input is essential. Further, the team should consider factors that influence the choice of specific assessment procedures including the student's age, degree of language proficiency in English, severity and nature of the disability, progress in school, years of support from special education, and the consistency of the results of previous evaluations. Existing information, such as classroom assessments; norm-based measures; curriculum-based measures; observations by related service professionals; and interviews with teachers, family, and student may provide critical data from which the team can determine what questions need to be addressed by the reevaluation. Finally, the reevaluation should emphasize the collection of functional data—data readily linked to instructional strategies. The outcome of the reevaluation should be a better understanding of the student's current levels of performance and needed modifications in instruction to match the goals of the general education curriculum to the extent feasible.

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

NASP encourages school psychologists, special education teams, school administrative units, and state education agencies to develop flexible and meaningful approaches to reevaluation. School psychologists have unique training and expertise in gathering and reviewing data, and their knowledge is crucial in the selection of appropriate, reliable, and valid assessment procedures.

School psychologists should also assist in developing appropriate instructional strategies and behavioral interventions so that students with disabilities may be educated successfully in their least restrictive environments with optimal exposure to the general education curriculum.

As part of the IEP team, school psychologists should assist in coordinating a review of the student's progress that considers the efficacy and appropriateness of the student's current program. School psychologists should work with parents, student, and teachers in determining future program needs, especially at transition times. Program changes or discontinuing special education services should be addressed when the student has made significant progress in remediating or compensating for learning or behavioral deficits.

The special education reevaluation is an essential component of comprehensive services for students with disabilities. School psychologists can make meaningful contributions to student success by approaching the periodic reevaluation as an opportunity to examine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the student's program.

RESOURCES

Canter, A., Hurley, C. & Reid, C. (2000). A better IDEA for reevaluation. In C. Telzrow & M. Tankersley, *IDEA Amendments of 1997: Practice guidelines for school-based teams*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997).

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