

Vermilion Association for Special Education

Specific Learning Disability Entrance Criteria

State Definition

Specific Learning Disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or writing, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and development aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, of intellectual disabilities, of emotional disability, or of environment, cultural, or economic disadvantage. In accordance with 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.130, beginning the 2010-2011 school year, Illinois districts are required to use a process that determines how a child responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation procedures to determine special education eligibility under the category of specific learning disability (SLD).

Cooperative Eligibility Criteria

A Specific Learning Disability exists when a student's academic achievement is significantly discrepant from his/her peers in one or more of the following areas: basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, and listening comprehension. A significant discrepancy is evident when targeted and intensive interventions have been implemented with fidelity and the student's academic achievement and/or rate of improvement continues to be insufficient to meet grade level standards.

Cooperative Eligibility Criteria

Step 1: Identification of a Disability

Y	N	Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including essential components of reading instruction
Y	N	Lack of appropriate instruction in Math
Y	N	Limited English Proficiency

Exclusionary Factors

Y	N	The student's difficulties are better explained by a visual, hearing, or motor disability.
Y	N	The student's difficulties are better explained by an intellectual disability.
Y	N	The student's difficulties are better explained by an emotional disability.
Y	N	Factors such as differing cultural expectations or other cultural/linguistic factors are present, and these are the primary factors contributing to the student's difficulties.
Y	N	Factors such as environmental or economic disadvantage are present, and these are the primary factors contributing to the student's difficulties.

Educational Progress

Criteria 1: Is the student progressing at a significantly slower rate than is expected in any area of concern (basic reading, reading comprehension, reading fluency, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, listening comprehension)?

No

Yes The student is progressing at a significantly slower rate than expected

Yes The student is currently making an acceptable rate of progress but only because of the intensity of the intervention that is being provided.

Discrepancy

Criteria 2: Is the student's performance significantly below performance of peers or expected standards in any areas of concern (basic reading, reading comprehension, reading fluency, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, listening comprehension)?

No
Yes The student's progress is Significantly Discrepant.
Yes The student's performance is not currently discrepant but only because of the intensity of the intervention that is being provided.

Educational Need

Criteria 3: Are the student's needs in any area of concern significantly different from the needs of typical peers and of an intensity of type that exceeds general education resources?

No
Yes The student's instructional needs are significantly different from peers in general education and exceed general education resources.

Step 2: Documentation of adverse effect on educational performance in one or more areas:

- ☐ Basic reading skills
- ☐ Reading fluency skills
- ☐ Reading comprehension
- ☐ Mathematical calculation
- ☐ Mathematical problem solving
- ☐ Written expression
- ☐ Oral expression
- ☐ Listening comprehension

Step 3: Determination of Need of Special Education Services

Y N The student requires specialized instruction to address the adverse effect of the delays on educational performance.

Step 4: Eligibility

Y N The student is entitled to special education services.

DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

Determinant Factors

Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including essential components of reading instruction:

Essential components of appropriate reading instruction include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Lack of appropriate instruction in math

Essential components of appropriate mathematics instruction include: critical foundation of algebra, fluency with whole numbers, fluency with fractions, and aspects of geometry and measurement.

Key Concepts related to appropriate instruction:

Appropriate instruction is defined as the use of *scientifically-based reading, math, and written expression programs, implemented with integrity.*

Scientifically-based programs are defined as those practices and programs that have been thoroughly and rigorously reviewed to determine whether they produce positive educational results in a predictable manner.

Implemented with Integrity

- Student received appropriate instruction aligned with suspected area(s) of deficit
- Teacher used and followed the research based interventions according to prescribed instructional procedure consistent with recommended intensity
- Each intervention was completed for a minimum of six to nine weeks in order to obtain 6-8 data points from progress monitoring

Lack of Instruction: No absolute “rule” for transfers and absences can be stated, as every student’s situation is unique. However, truancy patterns and laws should be considered when determining high rates of absence. Absences and transfers related to a disability will not exclude a student from eligibility.

Limited English Proficiency: The student is not a native speaker of English, or the student’s learning problems are primarily due to the native language issues. This evidence can include home language survey, ACCESS scores, native language assessment results compared to English language assessment results, and other assessments designed to assess the contributing nature of the student’s language status. Furthermore, evidence (such as PARCC scores) shows that the core curriculum meets the needs of LEP students or the student is performing at a level significantly different from peers.

Exclusionary Factors:

The student’s difficulties are better explained by a visual, hearing or motor disability: The student has passed hearing and vision screening or wears corrective equipment to ameliorate sensory deficits. Team judgment based on informal observation, teacher report, cumulative file, and/or parent/guardian report may determine whether gross or fine motor difficulties are contributing to the student’s difficulties.

The student’s difficulties are better explained by an intellectual disability: If the student meets eligibility criteria to receive special education services as a student with an Intellectual Disability, then the student is not eligible as a student with a Specific Learning Disability.

The student’s difficulties are better explained by an emotional disability: Academic skill deficits are not primarily due to depression, immaturity, recent life changes, unwillingness to complete work, or emotional trauma.

Factors such as differing cultural expectations or other cultural/linguistic factors are present, and these are primary factors contributing to the student’s difficulties:

Cultural Factors: The discrepancy is not primarily due to differing school expectation as defined by one’s culture. The

discrepancy is not primarily due to limited experiences of social interaction with mainstream culture or to limited experiences which stimulate intellectual growth or fund of knowledge. Cultural factors to be considered may include behavior expectations, family involvement/support in school, etc.

Factors such as environmental or economic disadvantage are present, and these are the primary factors contributing to the student's difficulties:

Environmental Factors:

- The student's academic skills are not primarily due to numerous school transfers or absences.
- The discrepancy is not primarily due to a significant traumatic event in the child's life affecting learning. Extreme disruption of disorganization in the family unit has not been the primary cause of learning problems.
- A personal or family crisis (e.g. death of a family member, parental divorce or separation, moving to a new city, victim or violence or abuse, etc.) within the last six months as the primary cause affecting behavior.
- Other environmental factors to be considered include negative neighborhood influences or exposure to violence or other inappropriate behaviors.
- Factors related to the classroom environment must also be considered. The student's academic skills are not primarily due to inadequate matching or teaching style with individual learning style.

Economic Factors:

- The student's academic skill performance is not primarily due to economic factors such as low income family, unemployed parents, limited facilities, and limited school supplies.
- Economic factors include lack of resources such as money, medical care, phone, and transportation.

The student is progressing at a significantly slower rate than expected: Evidence from Curriculum Based Assessment that suggests **little or no progress** in any area of concern. For example, a moderate impact on learning would be noted by a student who is making some progress, but despite the progress, the student continues to diverge from the aim line. A severe impact on learning would be noted by a student who is making little or no program, (or a flat or downward slope in the student's rate of progress as compared to goal aim line is apparent), and the student is not projected to meet the end of the year benchmark for their grade level or are at risk for not meeting state-approved grade level standards.

Curriculum-based assessment is defined as an assessment process or toll utilized to determine a student's status on skills that are taught in a curriculum. Curriculum-based measurement is one type of curriculum-based assessment, and is a set of standardized and validated short duration tests used to measure student progress in basic skills area. Examples of curriculum-based assessments might include: AIMSweb, DIBELS, EasyCBM, STAR360.

Any **area of concern** is defined as basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression, oral expression, or listening comprehension.

An **acceptable rate of progress** would be defined as the student whose rate of progress is either progressing parallel to the aim line approximating closing the gap.

Intensity of Intervention is defined as Tier 3 level research based interventions (for example: greater than 30 minutes daily one-on-one to small group no more than 3 students), including those tier 3 interventions that are above and beyond those interventions that can continue within the general education resources, and the scope of those interventions cannot reasonably continue without eligibility to receive specialized educational support.

Significantly Discrepant is defined as performance below the 10th percentile in any area of concern as evidenced from Curriculum Based Assessment and/or Standardized Assessment. If the student has not been provided significant intervention, the student's performance would be below the 3rd percentile at grade level and below the 3rd percentile one grade below grade level.

The student is currently making an acceptable rate of progress but only because of the intensity of the intervention that is being provided.

- Student performance not currently discrepant is performance between the 10th and 25th percentile as evidence from Curriculum Based Assessment and/or Standardized Assessment.

The student's instructional needs are significantly different from peers in the general education environment and exceed general education resources.

- The student's **instructional needs are significantly different** from peers in the general education and exceed general education resources. This is evidenced by the student receiving Tier 3 interventions.
- Evidence from Curriculum Based Assessment that suggests some progress but the student continues to diverge from the goal line and is not expected to meet the end of the year benchmark for their level. For example, the student demonstrates parallel progress with the goal aim line. A student with significant intervention would be those students receiving Tier 3 interventions that are above and beyond those interventions that can continue within the general education resources, and the scope of those interventions cannot reasonably be continued without eligibility to receive specialized educational support.

Evaluation Requirements for Initial Eligibility for Specific Learning Disability Services

Initial evaluation should consider the following:

DOMAIN	RELEVANT		EXISTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD	ADDITIONAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES TO CONSIDER	SOURCES FROM WHICH DATA WILL BE OBTAINED
	Yes	No			
Academic Achievement Current or past academic achievement data pertinent to current educational performance.				- Review of records (district assessment- STARS, AIMSweb, MAP, ThinkLink, NWEA, ISAT, PARCC, DLM) - Teacher interviews - Student interviews - Observation and Assessment of the Learning Environment - Classroom performance products (Creative Curriculum, Work Sampling) - Standardized achievement testing (WIAT, KTEA, WJ) - Play-based assessment - Curriculum-based measurement benchmark/progress monitoring (STAR, AIMSweb, DIBELS, FISH) At least 6 data points should be used when progress monitoring.	School Psychologist
Functional Performance Current or past functional performance data pertinent to current functional performance.				*School observations (Social interactions, play skills, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities, hyper- or hyporeactivity to sensory input or usual interest in sensory aspects of the environment) - Record review (grades, attendance, discipline, special education records, early intervention reports, etc.) - Teacher interview - Parent interview - Student interview - Behavior rating scales (SDQ, SMALSI, Conners-3, EC Conners-3, ASQ: SE, BRIEF)	School Social Worker, School Psychologist
Cognitive Functioning Data regarding cognitive ability, how the child takes in information, understands information and expresses information.				- Review of records - Teacher interview - Student interviews - Observation and Assessment of the Learning Environment - Classroom performance products - OPTIONAL: Standardized cognitive testing (verbal, nonverbal, or play-based assessment, WISC, WPPSI, WAIS, WNV, DAS, WJ, SB, C-TONI) to assess thinking/cognitive integration skills	School Psychologist
Communication Status Information regarding communicative abilities (language, articulation, voice, fluency) affecting educational performance.				*Pragmatic language assessment (Test of Pragmatic Language, CASL, Functional Communication Profile, Rossetti) *Receptive/Expressive Language Assessment (CASL, CEFL, Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals, EOWPVT/ROWPVT, Functional Communication Profile, OWLS, PPVT, PLS, TELD, TOLD, Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language, Test of Semantic Skills, Primary, Rossetti) - Standardized Assessment (ADOS) - Teacher interview - Observations (social communication, nonverbal communicative behaviors, stereotyped or repetitive speech, rigid or concrete thinking) - Play-based assessment - Assistive Technology Assessment (Test of Aided Communication Symbol Performance)	Speech/Language Pathologist
Health				*Parent interview to obtain health history, including current health status (diagnosis, medications, therapies)	School Nurse, School Social Worker

Current or past medical difficulties affecting educational performance.				*Medical review by school nurse as needed - Medical consultation with outside providers	
Hearing/Vision Auditory/visual problems that would interfere with testing or education performance. Dates and results of last hearing/visual test.				*Vision screening *Hearing screening - Audiological evaluation if needed	School Nurse, Audiologist, Visual Impairment Instructor, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Instructor
Motor/Sensory Abilities Fine and gross motor coordination difficulties, functional mobility, or strength and endurance issues affecting educational performance.				*Sensory assessment (Sensory Profile) - Teacher interview - Parent interview - School observation (stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, hyper- or hyporeactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment) - Consultation with outside providers - Motor assessment (fine and gross motor) - Play-based assessment - Assistive technology assessment	Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist
Social/Emotional Status Information regarding how the environment affects educational performance (life history, adaptive behavior, independent function, personal and social responsibility, cultural background).				*Social Developmental Study - Record review (grades, attendance, discipline) - Teacher interview - Parent interview - Student interview - Consultation with outside providers - School Observation (Social-emotional reciprocity, social interactions) - Observation in multiple environments - Adaptive behavior assessments (Vineland, ABAS-II, DP-3) - Autism rating scales (GARS-3, CARS-2, etc) - Play-based assessment - Standardized Assessment (ADOS) - Behavior Rating Scales	School Social Worker, School Psychologist

Impact on Learning	None	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Standardized Achievement: Standard Score	90 or above	89-85	84-80	79 or below
Standardized State-Wide Assessment	Level 4 & 5	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1

Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA): Compared to grade level expectations/norms	25 th ile or above	24 th -15 th %ile	14 th -10 th %ile	Below 10 th %ile
Progress Monitoring Data (Post Intervention Median Score Discrepancy)	At or above grade level benchmark (25 th %ile)	Approaching grade level benchmark (24 th -15 th %ile)	Below grade level benchmark (14 th -10 th %ile)	Well below grade level benchmark (<10 th %ile)
Progress Monitoring Data (Rate Improvement)	Strong Progress (at or above aim line)	Moderate Progress (Approximating aim line)	Some Progress (by diverging from aim line)	Little or no progress (flat/downward slope compared to aim line)
Intervention Tier: All previous tiers should be checked as the child moves to the right	Tier 1: Core Instruction	Tier 2: An additional intervention time (approx.. 60 min/wk) in a small group setting	Tier 3: More additional intervention time added in a very small group (e.g. 1:1, 1:2, 1:3 teacher/student ratio), 4-5x/week, 20-30 min/day	Tier 3: Continuation of more additional intervention time added in a very small group (e.g. 1:1, 1:2, 1:3 teacher/student ratio), 4-5x/week, 20-30 min/day
Likelihood of SPED, SLD Eligibility	Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Highly Likely
Other helpful hints to consider: 1. It is good practice to have a minimum of 6-8 progress monitoring data points at each tier to help determine the effectiveness of the intervention. 2. Tiered interventions amounts of time and numbers of days are good practice recommendations. These amounts of time and number of days may differ from district to district. 3. Although it is a requirement to process through tiered intervention prior to SLD entitlement, the lack of data cannot prevent a team or parent from making a referral. If the needed data is not available at the time of the referral, the team must put a plan into place to provide intervention and collect the needed progress monitoring data.				