



Special Education Identification Practices and Procedures

Referral for Evaluation

Anyone can refer a child for special education evaluation if they believe the child has a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that requires special education services, which includes:

- Intellectual Disability
- Hearing impairment
- Speech or language impairment
- Visual impairment
- Emotional disturbance
- Autism
- Traumatic brain injury
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Deafness
- Deaf-blindness
- Multiple disabilities
- Developmental delay (under age 10)

Within Copley-Fairlawn City Schools, initial referrals for evaluation are directed to either a School Psychologist or Speech Language Pathologist, depending on the nature of the concerns. The School Psychologist or Speech Language Pathologist will facilitate a suspected disability meeting within 30 days, including the parent and relevant school personnel to review information and data pertinent to the child, and determine if an educational disability is suspected. If an educational disability is suspected, the team will begin planning and obtain parent consent to conduct an evaluation. A meeting to review the Evaluation Report (ETR) and determine eligibility will be held within 60 days of receiving parent consent. If an educational disability is not suspected, the team will discuss whether other supports or actions may be appropriate for the child.

Reevaluation

Once a student has been found eligible for special education services, a reevaluation must occur at least once every 3 years. The purpose of reevaluation is to evaluate the impact of the student's current needs, and determine whether the student continues to qualify as a student with a disability under IDEA.

Copley-Fairlawn City Schools maintains a record of evaluation timelines, and will initiate the reevaluation process in advance of the 3-year deadline. With input from the student's educational team and parent, the Evaluation Chairperson (School Psychologist or Speech-Language Pathologist) will facilitate the development of an evaluation plan and parent consent will be obtained.

Evaluation Procedures

For initial and reevaluations, once the evaluation plan has been developed and parent consent has been obtained, the evaluation will begin. Each team member indicated on the Evaluation Planning Form will conduct the assessments and gather the information agreed upon in the Evaluation Planning Form. Each evaluator will summarize the results of the assessments they conducted and information they gathered. Information from all evaluators are compiled in a document called an Evaluation Team Report (ETR). The Evaluation Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that all components of the evaluation are completed and included as agreed upon on the Planning Form.

A team meeting, including the parent, will be held to review all information included within the ETR and determine whether the child is eligible for special education. During this meeting, each evaluator will present all results and information they included within the ETR, and team members will have the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification from each evaluator as needed. Parents are provided a copy of the ETR.

Appropriate Assessment

Copley-Fairlawn City Schools ensures that assessments selected for use in special education evaluations meet the following criteria:

- Minimize racial and cultural bias
- Are administered in a language or mode of communication most likely to yield accurate information for the student
- Are used only for the assessments intended purpose
- Are administered by personnel who are appropriately trained
- Are administered following the instructions provided by the assessment producer.

All of our School Psychologists and Related-Service Providers are highly-qualified in their respective fields and hold graduate-level degrees. They are each adequately prepared to administer, score, and interpret the results of standardized assessments.

Determination of Eligibility

Eligibility for special education and related services will be made during the ETR meeting by the entire team after all assessments and evaluation measures are complete. The team will:

- Discuss all information and assessment results included within the ETR
- Review the eligibility criteria for the area(s) of suspected disability.
- Ensure that the primary reason for the student's difficulties is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, or due to limited English proficiency.
- Use multiple sources of data and information to determine eligibility.

The Evaluation Chairperson will write a statement to include within the ETR justifying the eligibility decision made. This statement includes whether or not the student has been found eligible for special education, and why they do or do not meet the eligibility criteria for any category in which the team suspected a possible educational disability.

Any team member has the right to disagree with the conclusions of the ETR. If a team member disagrees, they should provide a written statement explaining their reasons for disagreeing with the team's determination. This written statement of disagreement will be attached to the ETR. If the parent disagrees with the outcome of the ETR, they have the right to pursue an Independent Education Evaluation.

Procedural Safeguards

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) protects the rights of both students with disabilities and the rights of their parents. Copley-Fairlawn City Schools notifies parents of their rights by providing them with *A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education*. This document is available on our website, and is provided to parents either hardcopy or electronically at specific points throughout special education processes. Pertinent to special education evaluation and identification, a copy of these rights are provided to parents, at a minimum, at the following times:

- If a parent requests a special education evaluation for their child.
- If the school suggests conducting a special education evaluation for their child.
- When beginning and concluding an initial or reevaluation for special education.
- If a student is found eligible for special education services, at least once annually.
- Any time a parent requests a copy.

Questions regarding parent rights in special education processes within Copley-Fairlawn City Schools may be directed to the Coordinator of Special Education.

Kelly Weitzel, Coordinator of Special Education

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(330) 664-4855

Qualified Team Members

All special education evaluations are conducted by a team of qualified professionals. Qualified professionals are those who hold the appropriate state-level credentials or certifications in the areas for which they are assessing or providing services.

At a minimum, the following individuals will be part of each evaluation team:

- Evaluation Chairperson: either a School Psychologist or Speech-Language Pathologist, depending on the needs of the individual student.
- District Representative: typically a building administrator
- Teacher
- Intervention Specialist (except in the case of speech-language concerns only)
- Student, when appropriate
- Parent

Additional team members may be included as part of the evaluation team, as determined on an individual basis of student need and area(s) of suspected disability.

Parents may also choose to invite additional members to offer support and/or share relevant information about their child.

Additional Procedures for Identifying Children with Specific Learning Disabilities

In conducting an evaluation for a student who is suspected of having a Specific Learning Disability, the team must include the child's parents, the child's regular teacher or a teacher qualified to teach children of the same age, a School Psychologist, and a District Representative (building administrator).

Additional documentation is required within the ETR when a Specific Learning Disability is suspected in order to make an eligibility determination. This includes:

- A direct observation of the student's academic performance and behavior in the area(s) of difficulty in the regular classroom setting.
- Consideration as to whether the student achieves adequately for their age or grade, has demonstrated a lack of sufficient progress in response to scientific, research-based interventions, or whether the student demonstrates a specific pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, that is indicative of a specific learning disability.
- Any educationally-relevant medical information about the child.
- Whether the primary cause of the student's difficulties are due to a visual, hearing, or motor difficulty, Intellectual Disability, Emotional Disturbance, cultural factors, environmental or economic disadvantage, or limited English proficiency,
- The child's participation in scientific, research-based interventions, including the strategies used and data collected.

Additional Procedures for Identifying Children with Multiple Disabilities

If a student is suspected of having Multiple Disabilities, communication and adaptive behavior skills must be assessed through the use of standardized assessments. Further, when determining eligibility, the student must show a combination of two or more eligibility categories under IDEA. However, these combinations may not include Deaf-blindness or Specific Learning Disability.