

Special Education Assessment and Eligibility

Cohasset School Psychologists:

Alyson Doyle MEd, EdS, LEP- Grades PK- 5

Dr. Vanessa Leary PsyD- Grades 6-8

Caitlin Stromberg M.S., CAGS- Grades 9-12

Pre-Referral Process

- Universal screening/benchmark assessment procedures (ex. DIBELS, FUNdations, Heggerty, i-Ready, Bridges)
- Teachers differentiate instruction
- Teachers may refer students to Student Response Team (ST)/MTSS when concerns continue despite instruction/classroom interventions/accommodations- Cohasset District Accommodation Plan- [DCAP](#))
- SRT offers consultation, additional screening, goal setting, additional interventions, and progress monitoring.
- SRT or parents may refer to special education testing; independent providers, doctors, preschools, private schools and early intervention teams may share concerns with parents.
- CPS reserves the right to conduct its own evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services.

Purpose of Special Education Assessment

- To identify learning strengths and weaknesses and the why behind concerns or difficulties
- To determine if profile meets criteria for educational disability, classification for special education
- Consideration of developmental milestones and effective progress

When Evaluation May Occur

- Initial evaluation
- Additional concerns arise from MTSS, SRT or IEP teams
- Parent request
- Every 3 years during re-evaluation
- Prior to 3 years if student has made significant progress
- Following consideration of an independent evaluation

Psycho-educational Assessment

- Psycho-educational Evaluations are conducted by the school psychologists
 - May include cognition/IQ/processing skills, memory,
 - Academic achievement in reading, written language, and mathematics
 - Social/ Emotional functioning
 - Attention/impulsivity
 - Adaptive functioning
 - Executive functioning, transition for 14+

Additional Areas of Assessment

- Developmental Assessment (preschool team can evaluate in areas of cognition including attention/memory, reasoning, and academics, motor, communication, social-emotional, and adaptive functioning)
- Educational Assessment Part A and B Forms- completed by general education and/ or special education staff
- Speech/Language (social, receptive/expressive, vocabulary, articulation)- SLP
- Physical Therapy (gross motor)-PT
- Occupational Therapy (visual/fine motor, sensory)-OT
- Behavior (aggression, off task, work completion, hyperactivity/impulsivity, self-regulation)- Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- Home Questionnaire- (developmental questionnaire)- Parent Feedback
- Health Assessment (completed by pediatrician)
- Observations (classroom, testing, private schools/daycares)
- Assistive Technology
- Vision/Hearing

School Psychologists Receive Signed Consent Form→

- Receive consent
- Record Review
- Observation
- Rating scales sent out if applicable
- Identify times to work with student based on student, teacher input
- Consult with teacher, other evaluators, interventionists
- Complete testing in small chunks (testing completed within 30 school days)
- Scoring
- Report Writing
- Present at meeting (meeting held within 45 school days of signed consent)
- Write/ contribute IEP if applicable, or participate in referral to Section 504 Team

PsychoEducational vs. NeuroPsychological Evaluations

Private NeuroPsychological Evaluations: To understand how a brain is functioning, provide medical diagnoses. Used to guide therapy, medical treatment, long term planning across settings.

School Psychoeducational Evaluation: To determine eligibility for special education services, are difficulties impacting access to education. To provide educational classifications for disabilities and determine if they require school services. Used to design school-based supports and goals and monitor progress. Follows legal timelines and special education law.

It is important to know what is being tested to not repeat tests within a calendar year

Special Education Timelines

- The District responds within 5 school days of request for the evaluation. Team Chairs coordinate this process. The Re-Evaluation process is initiated by the Team Chairs.
- The Initial or Re-Evaluation Evaluation testing is completed within 30 school days of signed consent.
- Reports are provided to families 2 days prior to the IEP meeting. This is done electronically.
- The IEP meeting and applicable follow up is all completed within 45 school days of signed consent.

Preschool Evaluations

- If student attends the district's Integrated Preschool Program as a peer, the preschool team meets to discuss concerns/progress and can refer for a school-based evaluation
- If student attends a private preschool or daycare program, steps may include:
 - Signing a release to speak with the private preschool teachers regarding concerns
 - Observations or informal screenings completed by the district preschool team
 - Formal developmental assessment conducted by prek team in areas of concern (2.9-4 years)
 - School psychologist may be involved for students transitioning to kindergarten the following year (older 4s-5 yrs)
- General education screenings conducted spring prior to K
- Dyslexia screener completed late fall of K (rapid automatic naming and phonological awareness)
- Developmental considerations based on standards (by the end of prek years)
 - Literacy (recognize some uppercase letters and own name with guidance and support; demonstrate beginning understanding of phonics)
 - Math (recognizing some numbers 0-10)

Transition to College

- Some students may still require accommodations when they embark on their college journey.
- All schools have varying levels of resources and support and this is an important part of the college research process for students and families
- Students will bring the IEP to the attending college resource department for support in securing the appropriate accommodations
- The CHS guidance department will be there to guide you through the process when you have questions or concerns.
- The Secondary Team Chair/ Special Education Liaison also assist with this transition during senior year IEP meetings.
- The Office of Student Services provides students with their special education record during senior week and marks important documents that will be needed to help with the transition.

Thank you!