

STEP 4 | Determine Areas of Assessment



PURPOSE

Evaluations must be individualized and tailored to each student's demonstrated areas of concern. Because language is most often the vehicle for assessment, teams must be deliberate about identifying only the areas where formal evaluation is necessary to avoid over-testing Multilingual Learners.

IDEA is clear: evaluations must be comprehensive enough to address referral concerns but must also avoid unnecessary assessment. (20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(2)–(3); 34 C.F.R. §300.304)

Key Discussion Topics and Questions

Based on existing data, what are the suspected areas of educational need for the student? Consider each of the following:

- What are the suspected educational needs of the child based on existing data?
- Are there academic concerns (reading, writing, math)?
- Are there language or communication concerns (both in English and the native language)?
- Are there concerns about the child's social or emotional well-being, and could these be related to the process of adapting to a new cultural context and the experience of feeling disconnected or misunderstood by school peers and adults?
- Are there concerns about the child's adaptive abilities, and could unique sets of cultural expectations confound these?
- **With caution:** are there concerns about the child's cognitive processing based on existing data, and are these concerns observed across cultural and linguistic contexts?

Sources of Information

Health screenings, referral documents, State and local assessment data, progress monitoring data, Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), family and staff interview data, observational data, etc.

References

Abedi, J. (2006). Psychometric issues in the assessment of English language learners. *Teachers College Record*, 108(11), 2282–2303.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(2)–(3) (2004).
U.S. Department of Education. (2006). 34 C.F.R. §300.304.