

Evaluation

NONCATEGORICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Model operating procedures created by



Student Solutions

and

Thompson
& Horton_{LLP}

ATTORNEYS | COUNSELORS

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NONCATEGORICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD

What is Required

A student must be assessed under the IDEA in all areas of suspected disability. A student between the ages of 3 through 5 can be considered for any disability category. However, if the student has a condition of developmental delay and meets eligibility criteria for an intellectual disability, an emotional disturbance, a specific learning disability, or autism, the student may be eligible for special education services based on the noncategorical early childhood (“NCEC”) disability category.

To determine eligibility under NCEC, the District or Campus Assessment Personnel will comply with the general evaluation procedures. See [EVALUATION PROCEDURES]. However, the group of qualified professionals that determines the student’s eligibility for NCEC must include the applicable members for intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, or autism. See [INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY] and [EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE] and [SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY, and AUTISM]. In addition, students who are eligible based on the NCEC category must be reevaluated prior to their sixth birthday to determine continued eligibility for special education services.

The evaluation data reviewed by the group of qualified professionals in connection with the determination of the student’s disability based on noncategorical must comply with applicable evaluation procedures of deaf or hard of hearing and visual impairment. See [DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING] and [VISUAL IMPAIRMENT].

Additional Procedures

When young children ages 3, 4, and 5 are initially evaluated, assessment can be challenging because of their short attention spans and varied and limited educational and sociological experiences. The District will evaluate a student who is 3, 4 or 5 who is referred due to a suspected disability and may find the student eligible by meeting the eligibility criteria for NCEC-ID, NCEC-ED, NCEC-SLD, or NCEC-AU.

The District will provide appropriate special education and related services to a young student who has been evaluated and meets one of these eligibility criteria to address the effects the disability or delay may have on the student. It is expected for children that have had the supports provided by special education to increase their attention spans, increase their knowledge, and improve their working memory when they are nearing the age of 6. The District will then reassess the student before the student’s sixth birthday, remove the noncategorical label, and determine the student’s updated eligibility.



Noncategorical Early Childhood

The assessment team will take into consideration the following items:

- Educational opportunities and support given to the student since entering school and how the student has progressed;
- Current testing data; and
- Parent information including private or outside evaluations the family has obtained for their student.

If the student does not meet the eligibility criteria for NCEC, or any other eligibility criteria under the IDEA, or does not need special education or related services due to his/her disability, Campus Personnel should refer the student to the Campus or District Personnel responsible for compliance with Section 504 to determine whether the student is eligible for accommodations or services as a student with a disability under Section 504.

Evidence of Implementation

- Notice of Evaluation
- Consent for Evaluation
- Referral Information
- Assessment Plan
- FIE
- ARD/IEP

Resources

[The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Noncategorical Early Childhood Framework - Region 18](#)

[Technical Assistance: Child Find and Evaluation- Texas Education Agency](#)

[Noncategorical Early Childhood - SPEDTEX](#)

CITATIONS

34 CFR 300.30(c)(4); 19 TAC 89.1040(b), 89.1050(c)