

## EVALUATION AND ELIGIBILITY

### A. IDENTIFICATION/EVALUATION PLANNING MEETING

The identification/evaluation planning meeting concludes the referral process to the CST. If the decision is made at the identification/evaluation planning meeting that an evaluation is warranted and signed parental consent is obtained, the individual evaluations of the student will commence. The comprehensive diagnostic evaluations are provided at no cost to the parent and completed in the student's native language. They are completed by certified professionals who will explain the results of their testing.

1. Eligibility for Special Education:

The evaluation shall include assessments by at least two members of the CST. For a preschool age child, who requires a speech-language assessment, it may be utilized as one of the two required assessments. If autism or communication impaired is the area of suspected disability, a speech-language assessment is required in addition to at least two other assessments by the CST. A hearing and vision screening by the school nurse is required. Other areas from which information may be gathered include a specialized medical evaluation(s), speech/language evaluation, occupational/physical therapy evaluations, and/or an audiological evaluation. The tests may be conducted by the members of the CST or by practitioners contracted by the school district.

2. Eligibility for Speech/Language Services:

The evaluation shall include an assessment of voice, fluency and articulation. A hearing and vision screening by the school nurse is required.

The evaluations recommended by the school district are deemed to be in the student's best interest; however, the parent has the right to refuse consent or withdraw consent at any time. If the school district disagrees with this action, it may invoke a due process hearing.

Upon completion of the evaluations, the professional staff will provide the parent with a written report of the details of the testing results. Parents will be provided with copies of the district's evaluation reports 10 calendar days prior to the eligibility meeting. These evaluations will help determine if the student has an educational disability and whether special education services are required.

The discussion of the evaluations and the determination regarding special education and related services will take place at the eligibility meeting.

Parent(s) may have obtained private evaluations at their own expense before or during the evaluation timeframe. If the parent(s) wish to share this information with the school personnel, it will be taken into consideration in identifying the student as being eligible

for special education and related services or speech language services and, if appropriate, in planning the program.

## **B. ELIGIBILITY MEETING**

Upon completion of the evaluations, an eligibility meeting will be scheduled to determine whether the student is eligible for special education and related services or speech language services. Meeting attendees will be asked to sign an attendance sheet. The case manager or evaluator will review evaluation results and answer all questions. The case manager will discuss the rationale for determination of eligibility or non-eligibility. Parents will receive written notice of the results of this meeting.

Eligibility for special education required meeting participants: Parent, general education teacher, student (where appropriate), and case manager. CST member(s) and other school district personnel, when appropriate, can also be invited to attend.

Eligibility for speech/language services meeting participants: Parent, student (where appropriate), general education teacher, and speech/language specialist.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Eligibility for Special Education**

In developing recommendations, the CST, parent, and any others present will discuss the evaluations and any other pertinent information on the student. The first decision is whether the student possesses an educational disability that adversely affects educational performance and requires special education and related services. There are 14 categories for special education eligibility: auditorily impaired, autistic, cognitively impaired, communication impaired, emotionally disturbed, multiply disabled, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, preschool with a disability, social maladjustment, specific learning disability, traumatic brain injury, visually impaired and deaf/blindness. For a complete definition of each of the disabilities see <http://www.nj.gov/njded/code/current/title6a/chap14.pdf>.

If the CST determines that the student exhibits an educational disability, a determination must be made as to the least restrictive educational setting in which the student can receive educational benefit from special education services. In order to accomplish this task, there are a variety of placements to consider. These placements range in levels of restriction, including class size, student-teacher ratio, and degree of inclusion. The progression of services is as follows:

- General Education with Supplementary Aides/Services
- Resource Center/Support

- Resource Center Replacement
- Special Class – In District
- Out of District Placement
- Temporary Home Instruction

## **2. Eligibility for Speech/Language Services**

In developing recommendations, the speech/language specialist, parent, and any others present will discuss the evaluations and any other pertinent information on the student. Eligibility requires a disorder of articulation/phonology, voice or fluency that adversely affects educational performance and requires speech/language services.