
Categorical Evaluations

Background:

Students ages 3 to 6 who have qualified for Special Education services in the Developmental Delay category must be evaluated prior to turning age 7 to establish if they meet criteria and have a need for specialized instruction in a specific Special Education category (ie. Learning Disability).

WCED Guidance:

- The evaluation is considered a re-evaluation for process but a student must meet the initial standard for criteria in a specific disability category to continue to qualify for Special Education services.
- A student in this age range who has already been categorically placed (example: Deaf and Hard of Hearing) does not need to be assessed prior to turning age 7 unless it is the normal timing of a 3 year reevaluation.
- A student in this age range who was categorically placed under EBD 3-6, which has slightly different criteria, does not need to be categorically evaluated again at age 7. If the team has additional academic or other concerns which were not assessed when placed EBD 3-6, the team would address those areas in the reevaluation process.
- Best practice would be to do a comprehensive evaluation to determine if the student meets categorical disability criteria, **however:**
- A student who is demonstrating grade level competencies and there is data to support this; you must still conduct an evaluation but it may be done by using a file review as your source of information to establish that the student does not meet criteria for a special education disability category. This evaluation should include updated information reported by parent/guardian and the classroom teacher.
- Even though the evaluation is comprehensive (SLD, EBD, OHD, etc) if a Specific Learning Disability is suspected, it may be beneficial to wait until the student is as close to age 7 as possible when administering standardized assessments.
- For a student being served under Developmental Delay (DD) who is approaching a 3 year reeval at age 6, the team may decide to do a file review evaluation under DD and continue service until age 7. The team may also decide to proceed with a categorical evaluation at age 6.