

Guidelines When Considering an Initial Referral for Special Education for English Learners (ELs) Supplemental Response Form to the Student Data Review Guide

The identification of a suspected disability condition in students that are English learners (ELs) requires an investigation into the cultural, linguistic, and educational background of the student. There is a typical progression of skills that occurs during second language acquisition that could appear as a disability condition.

The attached response form may be used by culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) review teams to ensure a variety of data-gathering strategies and tools are considered when an English learner demonstrates difficulties in the educational setting. This form will also assist the CLD review teams as they gather data to see if identified difficulties appear to be associated with second language acquisition (language difference) or if the difficulties require a referral to special education. It is important to understand that a student with a suspected disability condition would be expected to demonstrate difficulties in the student's primary language as well as English.

In order to review the information from a variety of perspectives, the CLD review team should be multidisciplinary and may consist of members that have expertise in areas such as second language acquisition, speech and language development, evaluation of students with disabilities, educational expectations, and linguistic and cultural differences of students that are English learners.

As the CLD review team members complete the response form, it is very important that English learners are not compared to monolingual peers. Comparisons should be limited only to other students learning English with similar backgrounds related to culture, linguistic experience, school attendance, classroom performance, and literacy exposure. Linguistic proficiency of the first language(s) as well as English should be monitored continuously for growth or language loss as these skills fluctuate rapidly.

This supplemental response form is designed to help CLD review teams consolidate the referral information for easy reference as they analyze a variety of information. The document is separated into five sections: Home/Background, Speech-Language Development, Educational History & Performance, Assessments (Formal and Informal), and Social Development and At-Risk Factors. There is an additional section available to add information or data that was not included within the questions to consider. Also included in each section, is a description of possible outcomes to determine the level of concern based on the difficulties reported. After gathering and analyzing all the information, the review team determines if the data indicates a language difference or a suspected disability and a need for special education.

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Home/Background:

Questions to Consider:	Description:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where was the student born? • What educational history does the student have outside of the U.S.? • Has the student had periods of interrupted or limited formal education? • How long has the student lived in the U.S.? • Does the student travel to visit family/friends outside the U.S. and stay for long periods of time? • What language(s) are spoken in the household including the student, parents or guardians, siblings, extended family, and caretakers? • Approximately what percentage of the time does the student hear/speak English in the household? • What language(s) does the student use most to interact with family? • What is the educational background of the parents or guardians/caregivers? • Do the parents/guardians work outside the home? • Who cares for the student when parents/guardians are not at home? • Do the parents or guardians/caregivers feel their child has problems learning or communicating? • Do the parents or guardians/caregivers report concern with their child’s cognitive, linguistic, or behavioral skills? • Do any other family members demonstrate difficulties with cognitive, linguistic, or behavioral skills? 	<p>Information indicates limited concern regarding educational difficulties, interventions/supports or suspected disability condition.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates some concerns regarding educational difficulties; however, current supports and time to receive instruction indicate adequate progress.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates ongoing concerns related to educational difficulties and increased amounts of intervention/supports are required.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates significant concerns related to educational difficulties; requires increased intervention/supports; and may indicate suspected disability condition.</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	

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Speech/Language Development:

Questions to Consider:	Description:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the first language(s) the student heard and used? • How old was the student when first exposed to English? • Is the student’s language proficiency in his/her native language at an appropriate level for his/her age? • How long has the student been learning English? • How does the student’s language development compare to his/her siblings? • When the student speaks in his/her native language, is the level of intelligibility commensurate with similar peers? • Does the student demonstrate characteristics of bilingual phenomena (e.g., silent period, incorrect grammar, transfer of words/sounds from native language to English) that are typical of second language acquisition? • What opportunities does the student have to play or interact with other students who speak English? • What language does the student prefer using? • Do parents or guardians report difficulties with speech or language when the student first acquired the native language? • What language(s) are spoken in the immediate community? • Do any other family members demonstrate difficulty listening, speaking, or sharing thoughts or ideas in the native language? • Does the student currently or has the student previously received any outside therapy services to address communication difficulties or any other difficulties? • What types of accommodations and supports provided in the household ensure the student understands and responds to household routines? 	<p>Information indicates limited concern regarding educational difficulties, interventions/supports or suspected disability condition.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates some concerns regarding educational difficulties; however, current supports and time to receive instruction indicate adequate progress.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates ongoing concerns related to educational difficulties and increased amounts of intervention/supports are required.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates significant concerns related to educational difficulties; requires increased intervention/supports; and may indicate suspected disability condition.</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	

Educational History & Performance:

Questions to Consider:	Description:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the student received any interventions in school? If yes, describe them, including language in which interventions provided. • Did the student attend any type of day-care or a preschool program? If so, what languages were spoken, and did the student make progress? • Overall, in what language does the student learn best? • How do the difficulties impact instruction related to listening, speaking, reading, and writing? • Does the student receive bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) support? • What types of classroom accommodations have been provided? Which ones help the student understand and respond to classroom routines? • How is English language acquisition monitored? • What are the student’s language proficiency levels in the native language and English? • Does the student respond to oral directives independently or watch others to see what they are doing? • Is the student’s performance in language development and academic performance comparable to similar peers? • In what language does the student best understand and respond to classroom directives? • When providing some direct informal activities and instructions in the native language, is learning improved and progress indicated? • When providing some direct informal activities and instruction in English, is learning improved and progress indicated? 	<p>Information indicates limited concern regarding educational difficulties, interventions/supports or suspected disability condition.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates some concerns regarding educational difficulties; however, current supports and time to receive instruction indicate adequate progress.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates ongoing concerns related to educational difficulties and increased amounts of intervention/supports are required.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates significant concerns related to educational difficulties; requires increased intervention/supports; and may indicate suspected disability condition.</p>
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Assessments (Formal and Informal):

Questions to Consider:	Description:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe languages used in administration and results of any formal assessments such as achievement tests, cognitive tests, or speech and language tests that may have been previously administered to the student. • Did the assessments include methods to measure the student’s abilities and not the student’s English language skills? • Has the student taken the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)? If so, describe all past and current results. • What curriculum-based and criterion-referenced assessments were provided to the student? Describe the results. • What informal information such as work samples, observations, and altered tests was collected from the teacher or other specialized personnel? Describe the results. • Do the formal and informal assessments indicate difficulties in the native language? • Do the formal and informal assessments indicate difficulties in the English language? • Were evaluations completed outside the school district and provided to the district by the parent(s) or guardians(s)? If so, describe. 	<p>Information indicates limited concern regarding educational difficulties, interventions/supports or suspected disability condition.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates some concerns regarding educational difficulties; however, current supports and time to receive instruction indicate adequate progress.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates ongoing concerns related to educational difficulties and increased amounts of intervention/supports are required.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates significant concerns related to educational difficulties; requires increased intervention/supports; and may indicate suspected disability condition.</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	

Social Development and At-Risk Factors:

Questions to Consider:	Description:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the student play appropriately with siblings or other students in their native language? • Does the student have difficulty interacting with adults? • Does the student have one or more friends with whom he/she interacts regularly? • What behaviors in the native culture may influence current observed behaviors? • Is the student involved in community experiences such as organized sports, community events, religious activities, etc.? Describe. • What is the primary language spoken during extracurricular activities? • What do coaches or teachers report about the student’s language and learning skills during extracurricular or community events? • Has the student experienced the loss of a parent/guardian due to death or other permanent separation including divorce? • Does the student appear to be living in poverty? If yes, describe. 	<p>Information indicates limited concern regarding educational difficulties, interventions/supports or suspected disability condition.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates some concerns regarding educational difficulties; however, current supports and time to receive instruction indicate adequate progress.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates ongoing concerns related to educational difficulties and increased amounts of intervention/supports are required.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates significant concerns related to educational difficulties; requires increased intervention/supports; and may indicate suspected disability condition.</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	

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Additional Data:

<p>Include any additional data here that have not been previously considered but are relevant to the consideration of an initial special education referral.</p>	<p>Information indicates limited concern regarding educational difficulties, interventions/supports or suspected disability condition.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates some concerns regarding educational difficulties; however, current supports and time to receive instruction indicate adequate progress.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates ongoing concerns related to educational difficulties and increased amounts of intervention/supports are required.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Information indicates significant concerns related to educational difficulties; requires increased intervention/supports; and may indicate suspected disability condition.</p>
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