

REFERRAL FOR SCREENING

Definition

While there is no official definition of screening, the difference between screening and assessment seems to depend largely on its purpose. A special education assessment is focused on collecting information about a student in all areas related to a suspected disability for the purpose of determining eligibility and/or the need for special education services. Screening focuses on collecting information about multiple students in relation to their instructional programs in order to determine instructional strategies.

Legal Requirements

The screening of a student by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered to be an assessment for eligibility for special education and related services.

Legal References

EC 563121; 34 CFR 300:302

Local Procedures

For clarity, screenings should be viewed as a form of consultative service from a specialist, and should generally include an entire classroom or a significant portion of the class. Screening in this context may include observation, file review, examination of work samples, teacher interviews, etc. for the purpose of improving a student's instructional program. Screenings may be conducted for non-identified students or students with disabilities. Screenings may be performed by a variety of persons, i.e., special education teachers, service providers, program specialists, etc. Screenings may be performed at the request of the general education or special education teacher.

Following is the most common example of how screenings may be legally utilized:

1. A speech and language therapist does a brief assessment of each of the students in a kindergarten class in order to assist the teacher with targeted interventions for common articulation errors present in such an age group.

Screenings may not be used as a means of avoiding a referral for a special education evaluation, although they might be used to inform a student's IEP team regarding whether he/she might have a need for assessment in a newly identified area of need.

FAQs

Do I have to write a report if I conduct a screening?

There is no official guidance in this regard, but the SELPA does not recommend filing a written report.

Can I use a portion of a standardized test as a screener and/or without parental consent?

No, you should obtain parental consent to administer portions of any standardized assessments to a student.

REMINDERS

- Screenings are to determine appropriate instructional strategies for a student.
- Screenings cannot be used as a means of avoiding a referral for a special education evaluation.
- Screenings cannot replace the formal assessment needed to determine eligibility.
- Screenings should never involve the administration of individualized standardized tests.