

Assessment, Determination, and Accommodations (IEP and 504 Plans)

When a teacher and/or parent suspects delays in the development of speech-language, readiness, motor, social-behavior, academic, and self-help skills a meeting will be called to discuss. Concerned parents may then contact the MID's Exceptional Children Program to request evaluations (or re-evaluations) to be considered for Exceptional Children services.

- 1) Assessment-**An Assessment is the process of gathering information about a child to make decisions about a potential disability, strengths, weaknesses and areas of need.
 - a) The steps involved in this process
 - i) The IEP team meets with the parents to discuss their concerns.
 - ii) If the team determines an evaluation is needed, written permission for testing is obtained. The team obtains any already completed test reports and conducts a comprehensive assessment that follows federal and state guidelines.
 - iii) The IEP team schedules a final conference with the student's parents to discuss the evaluation results and decides whether or not special education and support services are needed.
 - b) MID's responsibility when a parent/guardian requests an evaluation for a child.
 - i) When a parent requests an evaluation for his/her child, the school must hold a DEC 1 IEP Meeting within (30) days of the request. If a written parental request is presented, the (90) day timeline begins upon receipt of the letter. If the determination at the DEC 1 IEP Meeting indicates an evaluation is warranted, interventions must run concurrently to the collection of the evaluation data.
 - c) MID's responsibility when someone other than a parent/guardian requests an evaluation for a child?
 - i) Within thirty (30) days of receipt of written notification of concerns regarding a child, the school shall notify the child's parent in writing. The notification shall include either an explanation of reasons the school will not pursue the evaluation or a date for a meeting in which the school and parent will review existing data and determine whether a referral for consideration of eligibility for special education is necessary. Such meeting must be held within a reasonable time.

** When a decision to refer a child to the IEP Team or the school receives a parental written request for referral, a 90-day timeline begins. The "date of receipt" must be documented on the DEC 1.*

- 2) Determination-**A Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider service delivery options based on the needs of each student. Teams may consider regular, resource or separate settings which are available at every school for students participating in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Teams may also consider self-contained classes for students with significant behavioral challenges or student with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards
 - a) MID uses the Common Core State Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards. Exceptional Children teachers use a variety of strategies to help students make progress in the curriculum, including co-teaching with general education teachers.

- b) Students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in the Extensions of the Common Core Standards. This curriculum teaches the essential elements of the traditional course of study while also emphasizing the acquisition of functional skills.

i) **IEP Team Members**

The required members of an IEP Team are a school administrator, EC teacher, parent, general education teacher of the child, an individual qualified to interpret assessment and evaluation results, and related service providers (if applicable). The team may invite other individuals with relevant information regarding the student. The name of each staff member attending the meeting should appear on the Invitation to Conference form. The parent may invite other individuals to the meeting. All IEP members are to remain in attendance for the duration of the meeting. If a required member of the IEP Team is not present or available for an entire meeting, the meeting cannot occur. Therefore, must be reschedule.

ii) **Predetermination**

It is best practice to meet, discuss, and plan for an upcoming IEP meeting with team members. Decisions involving a student's IEP or EC services cannot occur in the pre-meeting under any circumstances. It is also best practice to share a draft copy of the IEP with the parent before the actual meeting. However, final actions will only be determined during an IEP meeting. Clearly print the word draft on each page of the IEP prior to sending it home to parents.

iii) **IEP Team Consensus**

All members of the IEP Team should be encouraged to participate in an IEP meeting, and every individual should have an opportunity to be heard. The IEP team should work to reach a consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, MID's representative (administrator) makes the final decision. Make sure the Prior Written Notice DEC 5 form includes all proposals, refusals, and detailed explanations as to why decisions were made.

iv) **Prior Written Notice/DEC 5 Form**

A DEC 5 must be completed at every IEP meeting. The DEC 5 must identify all proposals, refusals, and explain in detail the specific reasons WHY decisions were made. Parents must receive a copy of the DEC 5 at the conclusion of the IEP meeting. Receipt of the DEC 5 by the parent begins the 365-day window for filing a complaint regarding decisions made by the IEP Team. The DEC 5 must be signed by all individuals in attendance. A signature does not mean agreement; it simply denotes participation.

- 3) Accommodations and Modifications-**All teachers of a child with a disability (general education, EC, special area, related service) are required to provide accommodations and modifications as listed in the child's IEP. The IEP should contain specifics regarding WHO, WHAT, WHEN, and WHERE regarding accommodations and modifications. The purpose of an accommodation is to "level the playing field" for students with disabilities. Accommodations should be reasonable and allow students with disabilities to have access to their learning environment, manage a medical condition, participate in class activities, and demonstrate their level of mastery of concepts without being impeded by their disability. Accommodations that include an instructional component should be written so the integrity of the course content is maintained while not providing students an unfair advantage. Accommodations needed to manage a medical condition should allow the student

opportunity to take care of his/her condition. Accommodations should be reasonable and not provide an undue advantage for the student.

- a) Once a student is identified as eligible, appropriate accommodations are written into a student's IEP or Section 504 plan. These accommodations must be implemented by all staff that interacts with the student until a revision of the plan is made. Modifications of a student's IEP or Section 504 accommodations require a team meeting and a collective team decision.
- b) Each IEP and 504 accommodation plan must be constructed individually. While there are accommodations that are commonly used to address and manage certain specific conditions, each student's needs must be considered when choosing the appropriate accommodations. Selecting and monitoring the effectiveness of accommodations should be an ongoing process. Changes to a student's IEP or Section 504 accommodations should only be made with the collective involvement of students, parents and educators as a team, and should be made as often as needed. The key is to be sure that the chosen accommodations address student's specific areas of need and are related to the student's disability.
- c) Accommodations listed on a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan must be monitored for effectiveness in assisting the student in the area of disability. Progress monitoring should be completed quarterly. Any accommodations that are not effective should be revised or eliminated from the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan through a Team Meeting.