

Standards for Special Education Evaluation & Eligibility

The following standards for special education evaluation and eligibility shall be effective July 1, 2017.

DEAF-BLINDNESS

I. Definition

Deaf-Blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs by addressing any one of the impairments. A child with deaf-blindness shall be:

- (1) A child who meets criteria for Deafness/Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment; and
- (2) A child who is diagnosed with a degenerative condition or syndrome which will lead to Deaf-Blindness, and whose present level of functioning is adversely affected by both hearing and vision deficits; or
- (3) A child with severe multiple disabilities due to generalized central nervous system dysfunction, and who exhibits auditory and visual impairments or deficits which are not perceptual in nature.

II. Evaluation

The characteristics identified in the Deaf-Blindness Definition are present.

Evaluation Procedures

A comprehensive evaluation performed by a multidisciplinary team using a variety of sources of information that are sensitive to cultural, linguistic, and environmental factors or sensory impairments to include the required Evaluation Procedures for Hearing Impairment/Deafness and Visual Impairment:

- (1) Deafness/Hearing Impairment Procedures
 - (a) Audiological evaluation;
 - (b) Evaluation of speech and language performance;
 - (c) School history and levels of learning or educational performance;
 - (d) Observation of the child's auditory functioning and classroom performance; and
 - (e) Documentation, including observation and or assessment, of how Deafness/Hearing Impairment adversely affects the child's educational

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performance and the need for specialized instruction (i.e., to include academic and/or nonacademic areas).

- (2) Visual Impairment Procedures
 - (a) Eye exam and evaluation completed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist that documents the eye condition with the best possible correction and includes a description of etiology, diagnosis, and prognosis of the Visual Impairment evaluation;
 - (b) Written functional vision and media assessment* (assessment of learning media to determine primary learning style; including reading, writing, listening, and tactile skills) completed or compiled by a licensed teacher of students with visual impairments that includes:
 - 1. Observation of visual behaviors at school, home, or other environments;
 - 2. Educational implications of eye condition based upon information received from eye report;
 - 3. Assessment and/or screening of the nine expanded core curriculum areas (orientation and mobility**, social interaction, independent living skills, recreation and leisure, career education, assistive technology, sensory efficiency, self-determination, and compensatory/access skills);
 - 4. School history and levels of educational performance; including student, teacher, and parent interviews; and
 - 5. Assessment of visual functioning.
 - * Non-traditional students (i.e., non-readers or nonverbal students, as well as those with cortical visual impairments) will need a modified functional vision assessment to determine their primary learning media as well as their visual, tactile, and auditory needs.
 - ** Orientation and mobility may be screened by a TVI; however, if a full assessment is needed, it must be completed by an orientation and mobility specialist.
 - (c) Documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Visual Impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment and the need for specialized instruction and related services (i.e., to include academic and/or nonacademic areas).
- (3) Evaluation of a child with a suspected degenerative condition or syndrome which will lead to Deaf-Blindness shall include a medical statement confirming the existence of such a condition or syndrome and its prognosis.

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- (4) Additional evaluation of Deaf-Blindness shall include the following:
 - (a) Expanded core curriculum skills assessment that includes Deafness/Hearing Impairment;
 - (b) Assessment of speech and language functioning including the child's mode of communication;
 - (c) Assessment of developmental and academic functioning; and
 - (d) Documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Deaf-Blindness adversely affects the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment and the need for specialized instruction and related services (i.e., to include academic and/or nonacademic areas).

Evaluation Participants

Information shall be gathered from the following persons in the evaluation of Deaf-Blindness:

- (1) The parent;
- (2) The child's general education classroom teacher;
- (3) A licensed special education teacher;
- (4) A licensed medical provider (i.e., licensed physician, physician's assistant or licensed nurse practitioner) or audiologist;
- (5) A licensed speech/language pathologist;
- (6) An ophthalmologist or optometrist;
- (7) A licensed teacher of students with Visual Impairments; and
- (8) Other professional personnel, as indicated (e.g., speech-language teacher, low vision specialist, orientation and mobility instructor, school psychologist).