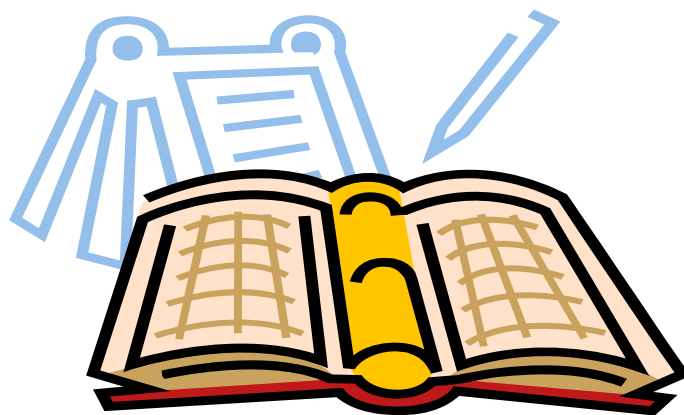


Initial Referral Procedures



CHAPTER G
INITIAL REFERRAL PROCEDURES

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INITIAL REFERRAL FLOWCHART

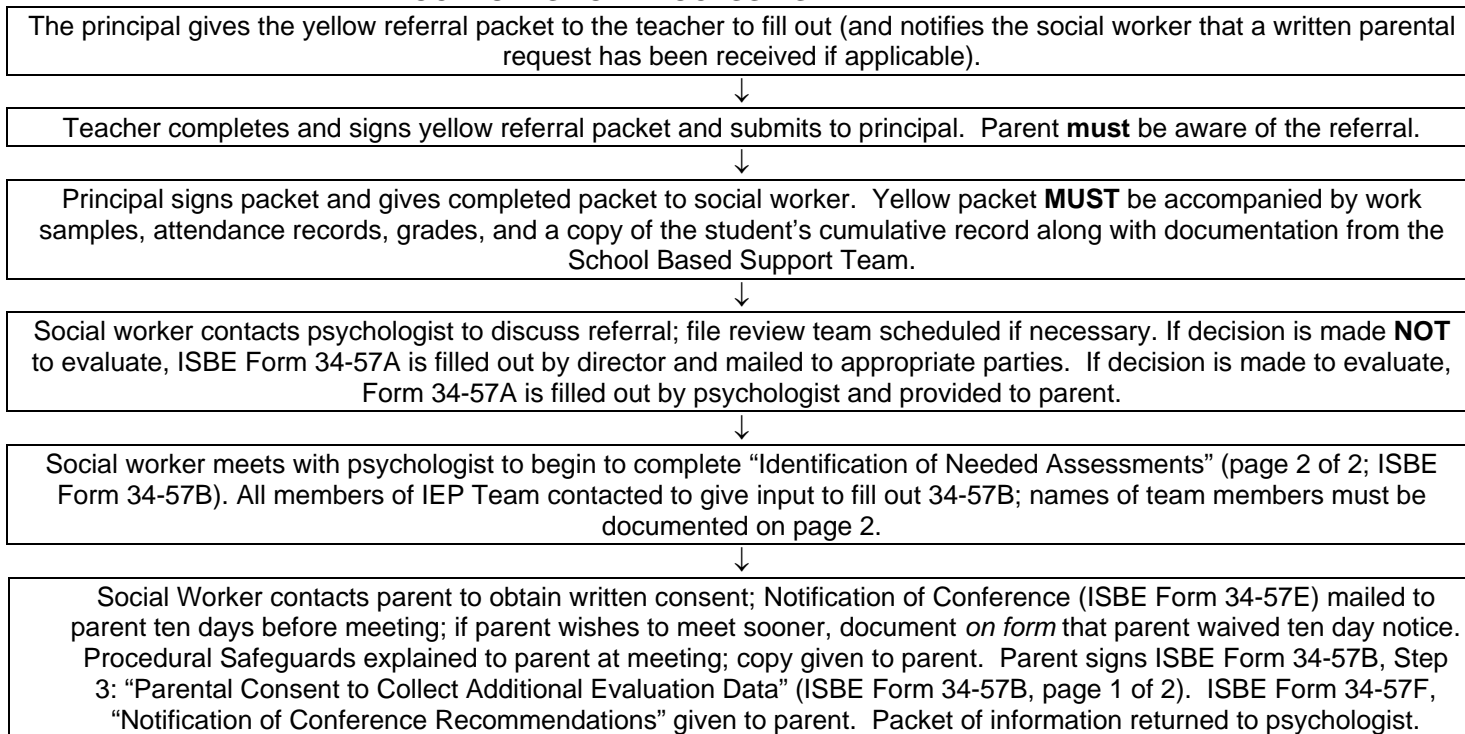
No official time lines for teacher/ school personnel initial **investigations**:

- ✓ First and foremost, the teacher discusses concerns and strategies with parent/guardian.
- ✓ Teacher/school personnel review student records, permanent & temporary.
- ✓ Student is referred to School Based Support Team; develop and implement interventions, document the student's progress and effect of the interventions.
- ✓ The school social worker and principal should also be aware of teacher's concerns regarding the student.
- ✓ Teacher charts student progress and notes strategies implemented and degree of success of each of these strategies.
- ✓ If, after a reasonable period of time, the interventions developed by the School Based Support Team are ineffective, or if the teacher still has concerns, the student should be referred for a case study evaluation.

If parent requests an evaluation:

- ✓ Clarify if the parent is asking for additional assistance for their child such as that available to every child, or suspect that their child has a disability and are asking that their child be considered for special education services through a case study evaluation. If parent is asking for assistance for their child, refer the student to the school-based support team.
- ✓ If they suspect their child has a disability, ask the parent to make their request in writing, addressed to the building principal, and briefly explain why they wish to have their child evaluated. Give parent referral brochure.
- ✓ When the letter is received from the parent, initial the letter and write the date received. By law, **we have only ten days to respond to a parent request**. Give the parents a copy of the Procedural Safeguards and explain their rights; make sure they understand the safeguards!

PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING AN INITIAL REFERRAL



60 school day timeline starts from the DATE THE PARENT SIGNS THE CONSENT

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Social Worker verbally notifies SLP/Nurse/other that evaluation is needed; Records Secretary sends copy of consent to SLP/Nurse or other related service providers identified as needing to provide components of case study evaluation.

↓

Psychologist gives packet to records secretary, who will:

- ↓
1. Fill out the top portion of the Case Study Assurance Checklist and project 60-day timeline. Make copy of Case Study Assurance Checklist to send with copy of consent to specialists who need to do a component of the CSE. Secretary will inform specialist of appropriate due date (30 school days).
 2. Make a brown file and enters information into EDWIN.
 3. Copy consent (Form 34-57B pages 1 and 2) and send to necessary specialists (see #1).
 4. Enters student information in database for tracking purposes.
 5. Places brown file in "pending" file. Records secretary will receive/document all necessary components, file in brown file, document receipt in student database, and send reminders.
 6. Sends request for information to appropriate person for outside/specialized evaluations.
 7. Give file to psychologist when all but psychological evaluation is completed.

- ↓
- Nurse obtains Release of Information for medical information, completes health history, vision & hearing and sends to special education office.
 - Speech/language pathologist completes evaluation and sends to special education office.
 - Any other specialized evaluation is completed and sent to special education office
 - Social worker completes classroom observation and assessment of learning environment and sends to special education office.
 - Psychologist completes educational and psychological testing.
 - Social worker obtains "Release of Information" from parent for any outside/specialized evaluations and sends to special ed. office.

↓

Psychologist completes psychological evaluation and observations (if necessary)

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Psychologist fills out rough draft of Notification of Conference (ISBE Form 34-57E) and gives it to scheduling secretary

↓

Secretary schedules staffing/IEP Meeting with parent. Secretary sends final copy of Notification of Conference (ISBE Form 34-57E) and Procedural Safeguards to parent *no later than ten days prior to the conference*. Secretary sends copies of Notification of Conference to all attendees. If parent waives ten-day notice, secretary notes on documentation form.

↓

IEP Team completes Documentation of Evaluation Results (page 1A) and Eligibility Determination (page 1B) of IEP

IEP Meeting Begins

↓

IEP team develops IEP (rough draft can be prepared prior to the meeting)

↓

Copy of IEP, Procedural Safeguards, and ISBE Form 34-57F, "Notification of Conference Recommendations" given to parent.

COLLINSVILLE COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10
DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

CHECKLIST FOR INITIAL REFERRALS

A **completed** referral packet must include the following items:

- Completed Referral Form** (Please make sure parental rights were given to parent(s) at time of discussion of referral)
 - ◆ If teacher referral, parental signature is required
 - ◆ If parental referral, written request for case study is required
- Copy of current year's grade card**
- Copy of cumulative record**
 - ◆ Grades
 - ◆ Attendance for all schools attended
 - ◆ Any previous 504 plans
- Copy of most recent group ability & achievement tests**
 - ◆ IGAP/ISAT
 - ◆ OLSAT
 - ◆ IOWA, etc.
 - ◆ Copies of class work (NOT worksheets) and other examples of child's work
 - ◆ Copies of discipline records (can by a synopsis)
- School Based Assistance Strategy Documentation** (as appropriate)
- Vision & Hearing Screening Form**

Please note that all blanks on the form must be addressed. Please refer to the timelines included with this packet for submission of required forms.

_____ given to School Principal/Designee _____
date signed

_____ given to School Social Worker _____
date signed

_____ sent to Special Education Office _____
date signed

DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Issues in Eligibility

Determining whether or not a child is eligible for special education is a complex and time-consuming process. The guidelines presented here are intended to assist you in making eligibility determinations. The questions are frequently asked of psychologists, supervisors, and the director. In many cases, there is no one “right” answer, but the explanation may assist you in your deliberations.

Eligibility decisions are made by an IEP team of qualified professionals and the parent. It is the responsibility of this team to consider all available written and oral information prior to making a decision. The committee must determine that the child meets all of the criteria for any specific area of disability according to federal, state, and local regulations. The committee must also determine that the student’s needs cannot be met in a less restrictive setting, i.e., general education, and that the school has attempted to address the student’s needs through both informal and formal interventions.

Eligibility decisions should not be based on whether a student “needs” special education services. The decision must be based on whether a student can be considered disabled under existing federal and state laws and regulations governing special education. Specific special education programs and related services are not determined by the IEP team making eligibility decisions. These decisions are made AFTER the eligibility determination. **Discussion of programs and related services must not be held when considering an eligibility determination.**

In making eligibility determinations the IEP team shall:

- Rely primarily on the results of the multidisciplinary assessment;
- Carefully review and consider all assessment data;
- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the student.
- Determine if the child exhibits one or more of the exceptional characteristics listed in Section 226.75 of the 23 Illinois Administrative Code which adversely affects the child’s educational performance. *Without an adverse affect on educational performance caused by the exceptional characteristic, the child cannot be eligible for special education and related services.*
- If the IEP team determines that the student meets each of the disability criteria for which he/she is being considered, the student has a disabling condition, and is entitled to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must be developed.
- Determine if the child requires special education and related services. As a result of the adverse affect on educational performance, the child is in need of special education and related services.

Consensus

Eligibility determinations are made by consensus. Consensus does not require unanimous agreement but does require that everyone’s opinion be considered in a fair and open process. Consensus is reached when all team members agree that they can willingly support the team’s decision. Consensus has been achieved when each team member either agrees wholeheartedly with the team or can sincerely support the decision even though he or she may not completely agree with it. If a team member cannot agree with the team’s decision, that team member must provide a separate statement presenting his/her conclusions.

Guidelines for Meetings

- Participants are punctual
- Meetings start at the specified time
- Meetings are uninterrupted
- Participants listen actively
- There are no one-to-one or side conversations
- There is active participation
- Participants adhere to the agenda as much as possible
- Participants are willing to try to reach consensus
- Participants share responsibility for the team's progress

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **As an eligibility committee member, where should your focus be directed when making decisions? Should you focus your attention on the most accurate eligibility determination, or toward the programs/services a student needs?**

Your focus should be on making decisions that reflect the written data and oral information presented at the meeting according to the eligibility criteria. Decisions should reflect your judgment as to which disability categories most accurately describe the student given the written guidelines provided by the state and CUSD10. The IEP team determines programs and/or services *after the student is found eligible*

2. **If a child is privately evaluated, does the school system have to complete any additional evaluations?**

It is the responsibility of the team to review the private evaluations and determine if they are comprehensive and sufficient to determine eligibility. An observation and/or clinical interview of the child should definitely be considered in order to determine what educational impact, if any, is present. Additionally, it is necessary to ensure that someone present at the eligibility meeting has either observed or assessed the student.

3. **If a parent tapes an eligibility meeting, do we have to tape as well?**

Yes. This tape should be kept in the student's temporary record at the special education office.

4. **Do eligibility committees recommend OT/PT services?**

No. The IEP team should review OT/PT evaluations only if the student is found eligible for special education.

5. **Can a student be found eligible based on oral information given during the meeting when information is not included in written form?**

All available information, written and oral, should be used in making eligibility decisions. However, in most instances, written documentation must be present. For example, a student with health impairment must have the health impairment documented by a physician. This documentation is necessary even when the parent may have given verbal information pertaining to the health impairment in the Social Developmental Study, or shared medical information during the eligibility meeting.

6. **Is an educational assessment always required for eligibility?**

The primary purpose of a special education evaluation is to determine if a student's educational needs cannot be met in the general education environment. Therefore, an educational assessment is essential in evaluating the impact of the student's suspected disability.

7. When the committee determines that the data are not sufficient to make an eligibility decision, does the committee withdraw the case or find the student ineligible and let the case be considered again once the data is available?

The committee makes decisions about what assessments are required in order to determine whether or not a child has a disability and requires special education. It is important that the evaluation provide complete and accurate information in order to make a sound decision. If the committee determines that the data are not sufficient and if the additional data required could be obtained within the 60-day time limit before an eligibility determination must be made, then the case should be withdrawn and reconsidered when the new information is gathered. If the 60th day is near, it is advisable to find the student ineligible based on the current information, since a decision must be made within 60 days. The case should then be referred back to the IEP team as a new referral so that the additional data can be obtained as quickly as possible.

8. What is considered a current assessment?

Current assessments are those that have been completed within 365 calendar days.

Please see the District website for specific disability criteria www.unitten.org

Placement Decisions

Placements are NOT “label driven.” They are based on the NEEDS of the child.

The following should be considered when making placement decisions:

1. Is the placement age-appropriate?
2. If there are behavior issues – is this a place where the child's *strengths* will be utilized, i.e., will the child be successful in this setting?
3. If there are language deficits, the placement should be based on the receptive language level of the child.
4. In considering the cognitive functioning of the child, keep in mind that IQ scores are most reliable around 10 years of age.
5. Does the child need an academic curriculum or a functional curriculum?
6. What support services (OT, PT, Speech) are available at the level the child needs?
7. Demographics: consider student/teacher ratio, room set-up, amount of stimuli or lack of in the environment.

For some children, the team may have to *build* a placement and think “outside the box.” Don't be afraid to be creative!