

# Early Childhood Evaluation and Observations

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## Agenda

- Child Find
- Evaluation Process/Procedures
  - Collaborative Problem Solving
  - Assessment Planning
  - Assessment Tools
  - Observations
- Q & A

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# Child Find- IDEA

Part B

## §300.111 Child find.

The State must have policies and procedures to ensure that—

All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless, children or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools, who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated

A practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children are currently receiving needed special education and related services.

Child find also must include—

- (1) Children who are suspected of being a child with a disability under §300.8 and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade; and
- (2) Highly mobile children, including migrant children.

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# Child Find- Chapter 7

- “Each school district or public agency shall adopt and implement policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities who reside within the school district’s or public agency’s educational jurisdiction, including children with disabilities attending private schools or facilities such as residential treatment centers, day treatment centers, hospitals, mental health institutions, detention and correctional facilities, children who are highly mobile, and children who are advancing from grade to grade, regardless of the severity of their disability and who are in need of special education and related services are located, evaluated and identified in compliance with all applicable requirements of IDEA, including but not limited to 34 C.F.R §300.131, 300.301 through 300.306 and these WDE rules and standards.”

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# Qualified Personnel

- (34 CFR § 300.306)
- The public agency/LEA must recognize the need for qualified personnel who are trained to draw upon a variety of sources such as testing, parent input, teacher recommendations, a child's physical condition, social/cultural background, adaptive behavior to consider the impact of such data.
- Informed Clinical Opinion (34 CFR § 303.321)
- Wyoming Department of Health- Chapter 8: Services for Infants and Toddlers with Developmental Delays
- Section 3. (b) (v) "Informed Clinical Opinion" means determinations made by licensed professionals using qualitative and quantitative information regarding the difficulty to measure status of a child's development and the potential need for early intervention.
- Informed clinical opinion is not used as an independent source of data to negate the results of evaluation instruments when establishing Part B eligibility

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# Evaluation Processes & Procedures

- Pre-evaluation/Referral components:
  - Screening to determine need for more intensive assessment (Allen, 2007)
  - Referral from parents, staff, pediatricians
    - Individuals are suspecting a disability and need for early intervention
  - Universal screening aligned to growth and learning indicators can be used to detect or identify need (NASP, 2009)
  - Collecting any relevant medical/health data, and completing developmental or specialty screenings (34 CFR §300.306(c)(1) (i); Chapter 7 Sec. 4 (b) (i) (C)).
  - Qualified personnel must seek parent input (34 CFR §300.306 (c)(1)(i)).

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# Evaluation Processes & Procedures

- Comprehensive evaluation:
  - Process conducted by qualified personnel and families used to collect data through standardized assessments and observation to determine overall development (Allen, 2007)
- The public agency/LEA then obtains consent and initiates the assessment components of the evaluation:
  - free from a racial or cultural basis
  - provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication

*(34 CFR §300.304(c)(1)(ii); 34 CFR §303.321 (a)(5)(6)),*

- administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel;
- in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer

*(34 CFR §300.304(c)(1)(iii)-(v); 34 CFR §303.321 (c)(i))*

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## Best Practice in Evaluation

- Instruments should be selected based upon the purpose and population for which it was designed and validated (McLean, Bailey & Wolery, 1996).
- Professionals should review to ensure the reported technical adequacy and approved reliability and validity (Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 2000).
- In conducting an evaluation, no single procedure may be used as the sole criterion for determining a child's eligibility under this part.
  - Procedures must include—
    - Administering an evaluation instrument;
    - Taking the child's history (including interviewing the parent);
    - Identifying the child's level of functioning in each of the developmental areas
    - Gathering information from relevant sources such as family members, other caregivers, medical providers, social workers, and educators, to understand the child's unique strengths and needs; and
    - Reviewing medical, educational, or other records

*(Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 2000)*

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# Collaborative Problem Solving & Assessment Planning

- All stakeholders, including families, should meaningfully participate in the development of education goals and evaluation of progress for students.
- Evaluation and assessment practices should be coordinated and used to inform individualized instruction necessary to meet a child's outcomes.
- Families should play an active part in assessment and the development of the instruction.

(NASP, 2008)

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## Assessments

Part B

### §300.304 Evaluation procedures.

- The public agency/LEA must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining if a child is a child with a disability; conduct sufficiently comprehensive assessments that do not rely on one standardized score or quotient and assesses all areas of suspected disability. Specifically, public agency/LEA must not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child; public agency/LEA must use technically sound instruments to assess cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.
- Instruments and evaluation tools used to assess a child:
  - Are selected and administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis; when feasible are administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally; are used for the purposes for which the assessments measures or are valid and reliable instruments when administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments

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# Best Practices in Assessment

- Identify referral concerns and assess in those areas using multiple assessment methods  
(Assessment should be used to determine eligibility, need, present levels and progress)
- Assess in all areas of suspected disability
- Gather data including informal assessment data such as interviews, reports, rating scales from multiple sources  
(Standardized assessment scores provide one piece of data compared to a normative sample)
- Use testing instruments with acceptable reliability and validity
- Use single and multi-domain instruments during assessment  
(Allen, 2007; NICHD, 2002; McConnell, 2000)

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## Test Instrument Qualifications

- *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME)
  - “individuals should use only those tests for which they have the appropriate training and expertise.”
- Pearson (2020):
  - “Qualified Users” are the individuals who assume responsibility for all aspects of appropriate test use, including administration, scoring, interpretation, and application of results.

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# Observations

- The public agency/LEA conducts an observation of the child:
  - child is observed in his/her learning environment to document educational performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty

*(34 CFR §300.310(a))*

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## Best Practice in Observation

- Observations are a critical component of early childhood assessment.  
*(34 CFR §300.310(a); §300.310(c))*
- The evaluation team must determine the purpose of the observation:
  - Identifying social/academic/behavioral needs, monitoring progress, or conducting functional assessment
- The evaluation team must select an appropriate strategy:
  - Event-based systems, used with low- frequency behaviors
    - Event recording (tally of all occurrences of target behavior)
    - Duration recording (record of exact amount of time student engaged in target behavior)
  - Interval-based systems, used with high-frequency behaviors
    - whole-interval recording (target behavior is displayed during the entire period)
    - partial-interval recording (target behavior is displayed at anytime during the period)
    - Momentary time sampling (target behavior is occurs during a particular moment such as the end of the period)
- The evaluation team must describe the context of the observation.
  - Environment and setting factors that may contribute to the presence or absence of target behavior.  
*(Lewis, Scott, Wehby & Wills, 2014)*

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# Best Practice in Observation

- Observers must define the target behavior with enough detail to discriminate between behaviors when reviewing the information for others (Hintze, 2005).
- During direct observation an observer must document the target behavior using data sources, document environmental context, and analyze the interaction between these variables (Lewis et al, 2014).
- The sequence of events that occurs during an observation suggests that identifying the appropriate environment and conducting observations across multiple environments is best practice (Lewis et al., 2014).

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## Tools For Conducting Observation

- Standardized Record Forms
  - Ex: High/Scope Child Observation Record-Infant & Toddlers
    - “The High/Scope Child Observation Record for Infants and Toddlers (COR) looks at the whole child— highlighting broad areas of development for children from the ages of 6 weeks to 3 years.”
    - Sense of Self, Social Relations, Creative Representation, Movement, Communication and Language, Exploration and Early Logic
- Practitioner Developed
  - Ex: [TOT.Template](#)
- Informal Narrative

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# Questions to Consider

- What target behaviors should be noted?
- What type of tool would best capture the behaviors seen in the observation?
- Did the observation result in data suggesting areas of suspected disability?

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## Case Study #1



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# Conclusions

- Target Behavior(s)
- Environmental Impacts
- Behaviors Impeding Learning

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## Case Study #2



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# Conclusions

- Target Behavior(s)
- Environmental Impacts
- Behaviors Impeding Learning

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## Case Study #3



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# Conclusions

- Target Behavior(s)
- Environmental Impacts
- Behaviors Impeding Learning

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# Summary

- Comprehensive EC Evaluations
  - Individualized
  - Review of Pre-Evaluation Data
  - Multi-Disciplinary
  - Seek to address all suspected areas of concern
  - Include observations as key components for data collection

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# Q & A

- Please feel free to unmute to ask questions or post questions in the chat box.

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