

Intellectual Disabilities FAQ

Definition and General Requirement

What is the definition of Intellectual Disability?

Intellectual disability means significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects the child's educational performance.

What eligibility criteria are used to determine if a student can be identified as having an Intellectual Disability?

There are three criteria that are used when determining eligibility;

- i. **Intellectual functioning** - A student has a score of 2 or more standard deviations below the mean on an individually administered intelligence test which takes into account the child's mode of communication and is developed to assess intellectual functioning using this mode. More than one intelligence test may be used to produce a comprehensive result.
- ii. **Adaptive behavior** - A student has significant limitations in adaptive behavior that are demonstrated by a standard score of 2 or more standard deviations below the mean on standardized or nationally-normed measures, as measured by comprehensive, individual assessments that include interviews of the parents, tests, and observations of the student in adaptive behavior relevant to the student's age, including at least one of the following: conceptual skills, social adaptive skills, practical adaptive skills, an overall composite score on a standardized measure of conceptual, social and practical skills.
- iii. **Educational performance** – A student is age 3 through 5 and has a standard score of 2 or more standard deviations below the mean on standardized or nationally-normed measures, as measured by comprehensive, individual assessments in the following areas: language development and communication; cognition and general knowledge. A student is age 6 through 21 and has a standard score of 2 or more standard deviations below the mean on standardized or nationally-normed measures, as measured by comprehensive, individual assessments in the following areas: written language, reading and mathematics. When it is determined that reliable and valid assessment results are not possible due to the student's functioning level or age, a standardized developmental scale or a body of evidence including informal measures shall be used to assess the child's educational performance.

Is there an age requirement for initially identifying students as having an Intellectual Disability?

Preschool students, age 3 through 5 could be found eligible if they met eligibility criteria. Students over the age of 18 would not meet initial eligibility criteria due to the definition of ID, in which it states that the intellectual disability is "manifested during the developmental period" which is prior to age 18.

What eligibility criteria need to be met for a re-evaluation?

Upon re-evaluation, a student who met identification criteria and continues to demonstrate a need for special education under s.PI.35 (2), including specially designed instruction, is a student with an intellectual disability.

Initial Evaluation

If parents want to have new academic testing (for students who scored 2 standard deviations below in only one area) during an initial identification, can the ID label be removed and other areas of disability considered?

Yes, although parents will need to sign consent for new assessments in the new area.

Re-evaluation

Will students stay labeled as CD until they are re-evaluated? Some students will be CD and others will be ID?

No, a student with CD will now be considered a student with ID. For purposes of reporting, both codes will be accepted in ISES this year. They will both be reported back out as ID once WISEdash is updated (early 2016).

What kind of transition will students who are CD right now need to go through via evaluation procedures?

Students with CD will be considered students with ID under the provision of the ID rule. Upon re-evaluation a child who met initial identification criteria and continues to demonstrate a need for special education under s PI 11.35(2), including specially designed instruction, is a child with a disability under this section.

Criteria – Intellectual Functioning

What does the language, “manifested during the developmental period” mean?

This statement refers to the period during which ID first originates. As defined, the age of onset is prior to age 18 (the developmental period) as stated in the 11th Edition of the AAIDD Definition Manual on page 93.

Criteria - Adaptive

Since it states “or” does this mean if a child has a standard score of 2 or more standard deviations on conceptual skills, social skills, or practical adaptive, then they qualify under the Adaptive Skills area?

Yes, a student must receive a score of 2 or more standard deviations on an assessment of adaptive behavior in at least one of the following skill areas; conceptual skills, social adaptive skills, practical adaptive skills or an overall composite score on a standardized measure of conceptual, social and practical skills.

Must observations of the child occur in the home setting since many of the adaptive skills can only be seen in the home setting and would therefore corroborate the interview findings?

The measurement of adaptive behavior typically includes observing the child’s behavior and skills in a variety of settings, including his or her classroom, school, home, and neighborhood or community by trained personnel. Because it is not possible for one person to observe a child in all of the key environments, measurement of adaptive behavior should depend on the feedback from a number of people. Information about a child’s adaptive behavior skills in the home environment should be gathered from parents using a formal adaptive behavior assessment rating scale. Adaptive behavior information is also obtained from school personnel who work with the student in order to understand how the child functions in the school environment.

What behavior skills from the previous CD rule are addressed in the three adaptive behavior skills?

According to the AAIDD manual the ten adaptive behavior skills have been incorporated into three adaptive behavioral areas. They are as follows:

Conceptual: Communication and applying academics

Social: Social skills and self-direction

Practical: Self-care, home living skills, appropriate use of resources in the community, health and safety and leisure.

Criteria - Educational Performance

How do you define a “body of evidence”?

Teams should attempt to administer a formal achievement assessment on students who are able to respond to the items. The body of evidence should be utilized only for students who, because of their functioning level, cannot access the assessment. Examples of items for the body of evidence may include, but are not limited to: criterion-referenced assessments, student work that compares them to their peers, developmental skills checklists, anecdotal records, and observations focused on academic achievement.

Ages 3 through 5

Does the child have to have 2 or more standard deviations in each of the following areas; language development, communication, cognition, and general knowledge?

No, the child must have a standard score of 2 or more standard deviations below the mean on assessment in both areas of language development and communication; and cognition and general knowledge.

Language development and communication are grouped together and cognition and general knowledge are grouped together for assessment purposes.

Does SLP need to do formal assessments for ages 3-5 to determine delays in language development and communication?

No. A speech and language pathologist is not required to perform a speech and language assessment under the educational performance criteria unless the area of speech and language is also a concern and being assessed.

Ages 6 through 21

Define conceptual skills, social adaptive skills, and practical adaptive skills along with the composite score.

According to AAIDD manual they are defined as follows:

Conceptual Skills: language, reading and writing; and money, time, and number concepts.

Social Adaptive Skills: interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, naïveté, (i.e. wariness), follows rules/obeys laws, avoids being victimized, and social problem solving.

Practical Adaptive Skills: activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, use of money, safety, health care, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, and use of the telephone.

Composite Score: An overall score on an assessment that measures conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills.

Does the child have to have 2 or more standard deviations in each of the following areas? It states written language, reading, and mathematics. Previously it was only two out of three.

Yes, a student must have a score of two or more standard deviations below the mean on assessments of written language, reading and mathematics.