

Frequently Asked Questions about the Speech or Language Impairment Criteria and Making Eligibility Determinations in the area of Language

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding the speech or language impairment area of language.

1. The criteria indicate a child's performance on norm referenced measures must be at least 1.75 standard deviations below the mean for their chronological age. What is the standard score equivalent based on a test with 100 as the mean and a standard deviation of 15?

The standard score equivalent based on a test with 100 as the mean and a standard deviation of 15 is 74.

2. Are two global language tests required or can one be a global test of language (for example the CELF) and the second a test that assesses only one area of language (for example vocabulary only) be used when assessing in the area of language?

Any combination of tests may be administered, so long as two different tests are used. In this example, administration of the CELF-4 and a vocabulary test, such as the EOWPVT, would meet the standard.

3. What happens if the student meets criteria on the first norm referenced test administered but not on a second norm referenced test that is administered?

The language portion of the eligibility criteria requires two norm referenced tests. If only one test measure came out to the -1.75 but not the other, the standard has not been met. Another test would have to be given that would demonstrate the -1.75 standard deviations below the mean.

4. What if the first norm referenced test administered to the child comes out average? Is a second test still required?

Yes, the evaluation must be fully completed.

5. How does pragmatic language fit into the eligibility criteria? Can a child be identified as language impaired with pragmatic language issues only?

There are various forms of language that can be impaired. They are semantics, syntax, and pragmatic language. An eligible child may be found to have one or more of these language areas impaired.

6. If a child was found to have a speech or language disability under sound production but later demonstrated difficulty in language, can language goals be added to a child's IEP if the only area of impairment identified is speech or sound production?

Yes. The child is already a child with a disability, so is eligible for services. Upon IEP review, the IEP team could determine the child's language skills significantly affect the child's educational performance to the extent specially designed instruction or related service may be required. If the IEP team decides there is a significant effect or impact on the child's academic or

Frequently Asked Questions about the Speech or Language Impairment Criteria and Making Eligibility Determinations in the area of Language

functional performance due to the child's language impairment, the team may decide to add goals related to language.

7. What is the purpose of the alternate method of assessment under the eligibility criteria for language impairment?

In some situations formal testing using norm-referenced tests is not appropriate or feasible for a particular child. In those situations, an alternative method of evaluation may be used.

Some examples of such situations include the following:

- The child's cognitive or physical limitations prevent establishing a baseline (basal) on the test.
- The population used to establish the norms for the test was not representative of, or did not include children with similar disabilities.
- The test cannot be administered as specified in the testing manual.
- The test is not designed for the age or population of the student being assessed.
- There also are children who perform well on tests of specific language performance but who are unable to use language for effective oral communication. These children exhibit a variety of behaviors that interfere with verbal competence, but their language production deficits are difficult to identify with tests of isolated skills. Identification of these children requires more precise quantification of production disorders at the discourse level of analysis.