



Public Schools of North Carolina

Special Education Eligibility Decision-Making Through the Use of Multiple Sources of Data

Summer Webinar Series

NC Department of Public Instruction

Exceptional Children Division

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Today's Presenter

Lynn Makor, Consultant for School Psychology

NC Department of Public Instruction/Carolina Institute for
Developmental Disabilities

lynn.makor@cidd.unc.edu



IDEA Eligibility

Formal evaluations within the public school arena are conducted when a child is suspected to have a disability under IDEA

eligible in 1(or more) of 14 areas of eligibility
+ adverse effect on educational performance
+ need for specially designed instruction
= disability under IDEA



IDEA Eligibility

All IEP team decisions are data-based; reliant on documented information that has been carefully considered...

After the IEP team answers questions related to:

- disability criteria (prong 1)
- adverse effect (prong 2)
- need for specially designed instruction (prong 3)

The team must also respond to the following (discussed prior to evaluation):

- ✓ The determination is NOT a result of lack of instruction in reading
- ✓ The determination is NOT a result of lack of instruction in math
- ✓ The determination is NOT the result of being a student who has Limited English Proficiency

☞ If all answers are YES, then eligibility for special education services has been determined.

☞ If any of the answers are NO, then eligibility for special education services is not determined



Educationally Relevant Evaluation

Should provide IEP team with information from each evaluator's professional lens

Should inform decisions about:

- Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance
- Access to Common Core & Essential Standards
- Goals
- Services
- Accommodations and modifications
- Least Restrictive Environment



IDEA Regulations

§ 300.304 Evaluation procedures

(b) *Conduct of evaluation.* In conducting the evaluation, the public agency *must*—

(1) 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...

(2) *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; and

(3) Use *technically sound instruments* that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.



IDEA Regulations

§ 300.306 Determination of eligibility

(c) *Procedures for determining eligibility and educational need.*

(1) In interpreting evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a child is a child with a disability under § 300.8, and the educational needs of the child, each public agency *must—*

(i) *Draw upon* information from *a variety of sources*, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations, as well as information about the child's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior; and

(ii) *Ensure* that *information* obtained from *all of these sources* is *documented* and *carefully considered*.



NC Policies

NC 1500-2.11 Evaluation

...A full and individualized evaluation of a child's needs must be conducted before any action... *Eligibility of children must be determined by using multiple sources of data and must not be dependent upon single test scores.* Evaluation procedures may include, but are not limited to, observations, interviews, progress monitoring data... or other techniques and procedures as deemed appropriate by the professional(s) conducting the evaluations. *When eligibility for specific learning disability is being determined, evaluation data must include progress monitoring data.*

Note: The determination of needed screenings and evaluations is based upon the unique needs of the student and not solely on the requirements for the suspected disability category.



Begin at the beginning: **Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services:**

Review of educational strengths (academic and functional)

- This will serve as the foundation for further development of skills, whether
 - The child is referred or not
 - The child is identified as eligible or not



Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services:

Documentation of targeted needs

- Academic
- Functional
- Behavioral



Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Data Review

- Local assessment data
- State assessment data (if available)
- Past/current grades

Parent Input

- Formal evaluation results provided by parent
- Information provided by parent specific to current academic and/or functional educational performance



Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Observation Data

- Systematic observational data collected
- Observational information provided by teachers, administrators and other relevant school staff (specific to the student's current academic and/or functional performance)



Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Targeted Interventions

- Documentation of interventions implemented (specific to the area(s) of need)
- Frequency, intensity and duration of interventions
- Results
 - Numerical
 - Graphically displayed (if available)



Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Considerations:

- Limited English Proficiency
 - *If yes, to what extent are the effects a contributing factors in current areas of need?*
- Factors reviewed and considered specific to adequate instruction in reading/math
- Additional information reviewed from other sources (discipline, medical information, etc.)



Referral for Consideration of Special Education Services

Summarize/Decide:

- Based on the information reviewed, what has the team learned?
- Now, what is the team going to do about what they learned?
 - If decision is “conduct evaluation” – what additional data is needed to inform instructional decisions for this student? (Educationally Relevant Evaluation)



Educationally Relevant Evaluation

Should provide IEP team with information from each evaluator's professional lens

Should inform decisions about:

- Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance
- Access to Common Core & Essential Standards
- Goals
- Services
- Accommodations and modifications
- Least Restrictive Environment



Educationally Relevant Evaluation

Guiding Questions:

- What does this student need to access, participate and make progress in the general education curriculum?
- What supports this student's performance?
- What limits this student's performance?



- Local/state assessment data
- Past/current grades

- Observations of
 - teachers
 - administrator
 - parents

Interviews/
Review of
Early History/
Social
Developmental
Data

Systematic
Observational
Data

Individual
Diagnostic
Assessment
Data

Formal
ratings of
behavior
and/or
adaptive
functioning

- Targeted Interventions
 - Frequency/Intensity/Duration
 - Results (PM data)

- Additional information reviewed from other sources

Educational Strengths (Academic & Functional)



**PREREQUISITE
INFORMATION
BROUGHT FORWARD
INDICATE:**

- **LEP IS NOT A
PRIMARY
DETERMINANT
FACTOR**
- **ADEQUATE
INSTRUCTION IN
READING HAS BEEN
ESTABLISHED**
- **ADEQUATE
INSTRUCTION IN
MATH HAS BEEN
ESTABLISHED**

**SYNTHESIS OF
ALL RELEVANT
DATA REFLECTS
CONSISTENCY
ACROSS DATA
SOURCES**

**PROCEED TO
SPECIAL
EDUCATION
DECISION-
MAKING**



Disability Data: State Trends

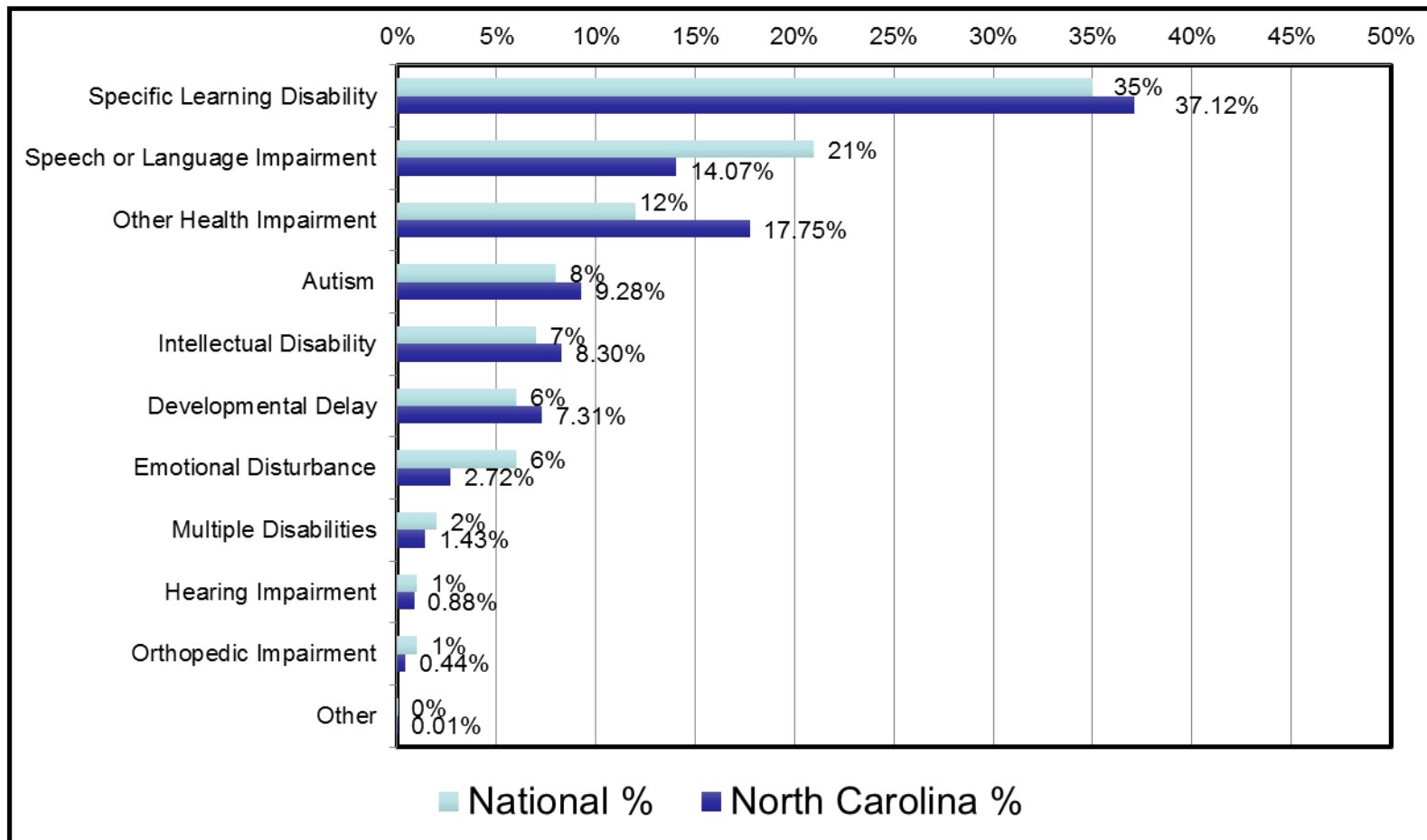
April 2016 Child Count:

- Total special education identified = 202,633 (3-21)
(Increase of 1,660 students from 200,973 in April 2015)
- School age (6-21) - 12.1% of school-age identified
- 5 most prevalent classifications (3-21):
 - 1) SLD = 37.1% of total
 - 2) OHI = 17.8%
 - 3) SI = 14.1%
 - 4) AU = 9.2%
 - 5) ID = 8.2% (Mild=5.7%, Moderate=2.2%, Severe=0.3%)
(A close 6th is DD @ 7.3%)



Disability Data: National¹ and State² Comparisons

Percentage distribution of children ages 3-21 served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act



Sources:

¹U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database, retrieved September 25, 2015, from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bcc>. See Digest of Education Statistics 2015, table 204.30.

²North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children's Division Reports, retrieved from: <http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/reports-data/child-count/reports/april-1>

Disability Data - Guiding Questions:

- What does your district level disability data tell you?
 - Are overall district percentages above or below state and national trends?
 - Are percentages by disability category above or below state and national trends?
- What does your building level data tell you?
 - Are overall building percentages above or below district, state or national trends?
 - At the building level, are percentages by disability category above or below district, state, or national trends?





Resources:

- Public Schools of North Carolina Exceptional Children Division. (2014). [NC Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, Amended July 2014](#)
- Federal Register. (2006). *Part II 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301 Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities Final Rule*. Department of Education.



Contact Information:

Lynn Makor

NC DPI Consultant for School Psychology

lynn.makor@cidd.unc.edu

<http://cidd.unc.edu/SchoolPsychology/>

