



Public Schools of North Carolina

SLD Fact Sheet #3

Diagnostic Processes

Webinar Presenters

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Objectives:

- Understand Diagnostic Processes
 - Within a comprehensive assessment system
 - Within an MTSS
- Examine SLD Policy Requirements
 - Purpose of diagnostic assessment
 - Continuation of problem solving
 - Evaluation purpose(s)
 - Determine disability
 - Determine effective instruction
 - Removal of requirement of psychological
- Compare and contrast formal/informal diagnostic assessments



SLD Fact Sheet #3

When an SLD evaluation is focused on gathering information **for the identification of effective instruction**, the utility of an intellectual evaluation is diminished. In fact, “...there is no converging scientific evidence that such measurement is important in the identification of LDs, including dyslexia (Fletcher & Lyon, 2008, pg. 29).” Accordingly, effective July 1, 2020:

- A psychological evaluation, which includes measures of intellectual ability, as a *requirement* for a comprehensive evaluation for SLD is removed from policy.
- The use of cognitive discrepancy formulas of any type for the purposes of determining eligibility for SLD is *prohibited*.
- The use of cognitive assessments that lead to important instructional decisions is *permitted*.
- Multiple sources of educational data, including formal and/or informal diagnostic data, are *required*.

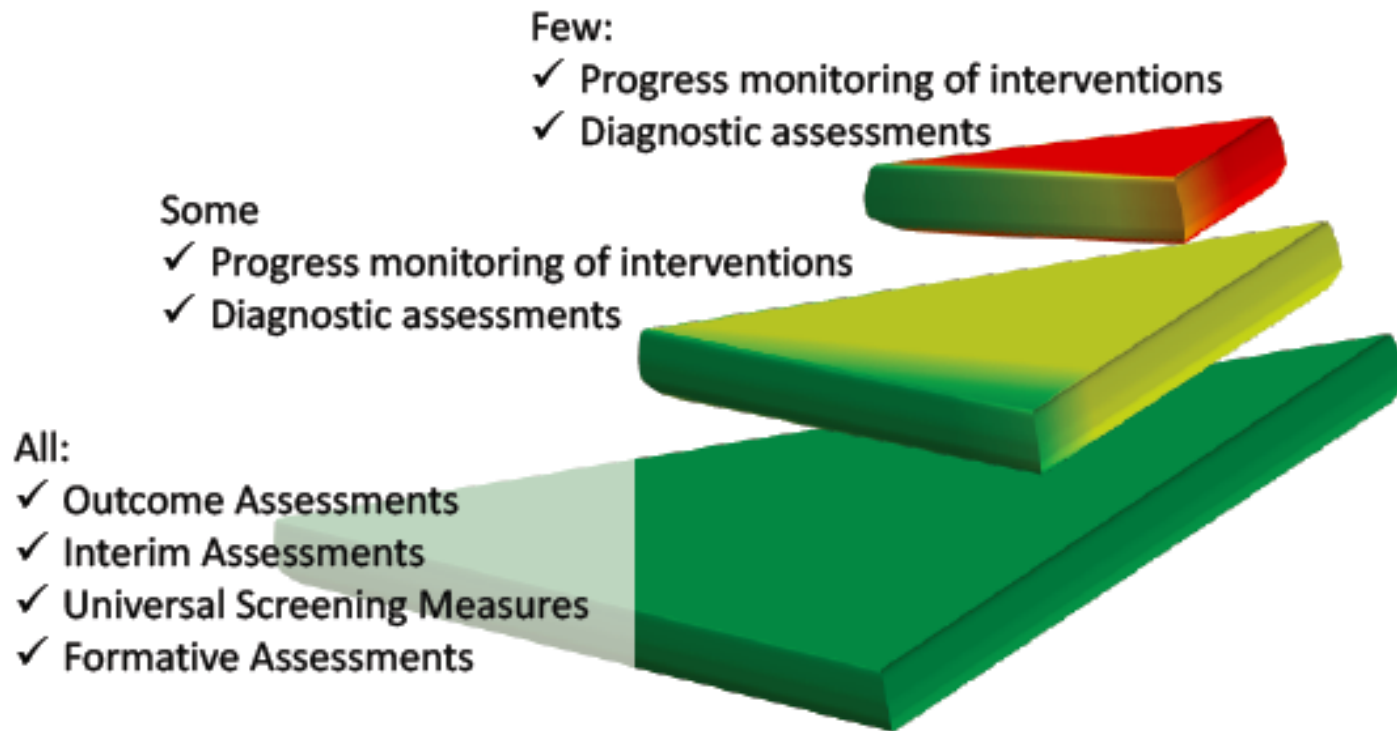




Type	Primary Purpose	Characteristics
Outcome Assessments	To determine if we met outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After Instruction ▪ Measures students against standards/expectations ▪ One time per year/course
Interim Assessments	To predict performance on outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administered throughout the year after sections of instruction ▪ Administered 2-4 times per year/course
Universal Screening Assessments	To identify students at risk and evaluate program effectiveness and growth throughout a school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All students 2-3 x per year ▪ Critical academic skills typically measured by curriculum-based measures or Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) ▪ Standardized administration ▪ Quick administration ▪ Predictive of larger outcomes
Diagnostic Assessments/ Processes	Used to determine why students are at-risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Used for individual or small groups of students for problem analysis (<i>why is the problem occurring</i>) ▪ Used to plan effective instruction/interventions that target specific skills
Continuum of Formative Assessments	To inform instruction and determine effectiveness of instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short cycle ▪ Used for planning daily instruction ▪ Useful in PLC planning ▪ Useful in monitoring core instruction



Diagnostic Assessment within MTSS

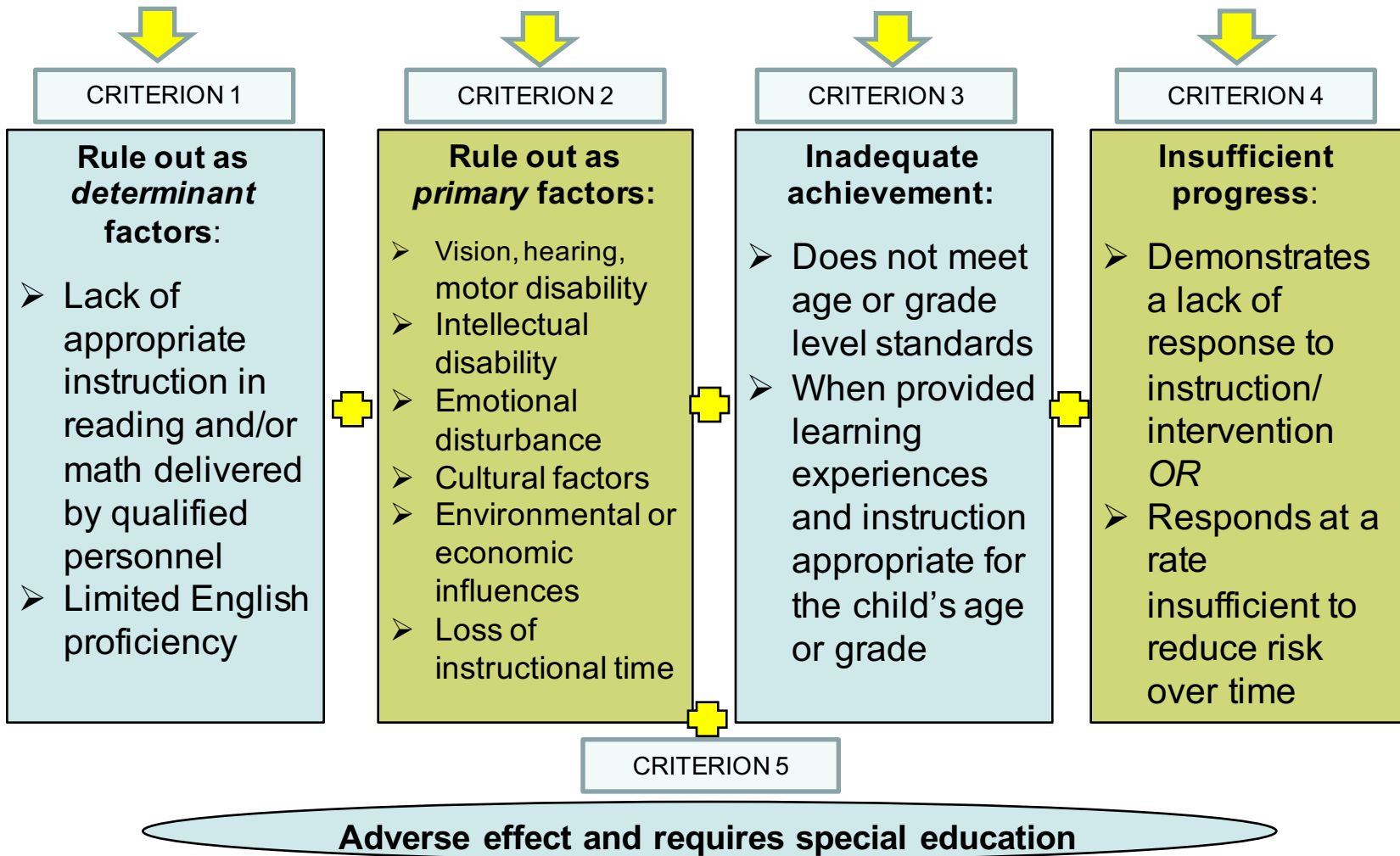


July 1, 2020

SLD POLICY



Convergence of Data from Multiple Sources



- (i) A comprehensive evaluation includes the following required screenings and evaluations.
- (A) Hearing screening;
 - (B) Vision screening (far and near acuity);
 - (C) Speech/language screening;
 - (D) Documentation of the results of at least two identified scientific research-based interventions which align to the academic area(s) of concern (e.g. critical components of reading, math, writing, listening comprehension, oral expression, etc.) including progress monitoring data;
 - (E) Summary of conference(s) with parents or documentation of parent participation in conference with parents;
 - (F) Review of existing data to include documentation of student academic problem-solving process (which would include formal and/or informal diagnostic assessments) and observation data of core instruction;
 - (G) Social/developmental history, including any relevant medical findings, a review of disciplinary removals, and attendance/tardy rates;
 - (H) Observation across settings, including core instruction and non-instructional setting in which intervention is delivered, to assess academic and behavioral skills;
 - (I) Multiple sources of educational assessment data, which must include, but are not limited to: universal screening, interim/benchmark assessments, data from progress monitoring and formal and/or informal diagnostic assessments. Student performance must include comparison to state and/or national norms, and district norms when available.



Diagnostic Assessments and Processes

NC 1500-2.x

- ...used to assist in developing hypotheses about why a problem is occurring and to identify a student's specific skill deficits and strengths **in order to determine the instructional focus and to inform decisions about how to adapt and individualize interventions.**



Diagnostic Assessments & Processes

- They allow instruction and interventions to be focused on the specific target skill and sets of skills that **will increase overall academic or behavioral competency.** They assist educators in **teaching precisely to realize the largest gains in student achievement.**

NC 1500-2.x



Evaluation Purpose(s)

Synthesize/Summarize RIOT
Data Sources



Educational Decisions (Eligibility)



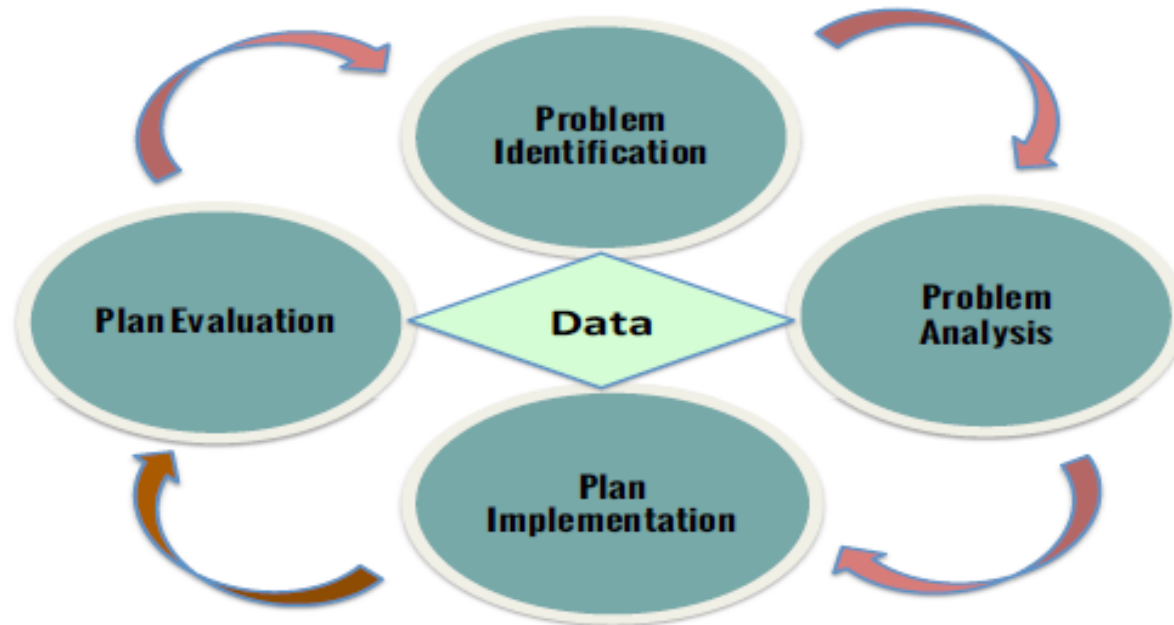
Educational Planning (Design of
Effective Instruction)

Regardless of IDEA eligibility status



Special education evaluation is a *continuation* of the problem solving process not the goal of it.

SYSTEMATIC PROBLEM-SOLVING



Educationally Relevant Evaluation

Guiding Questions:

What does this student need to access, participate and make progress in the general education curriculum?

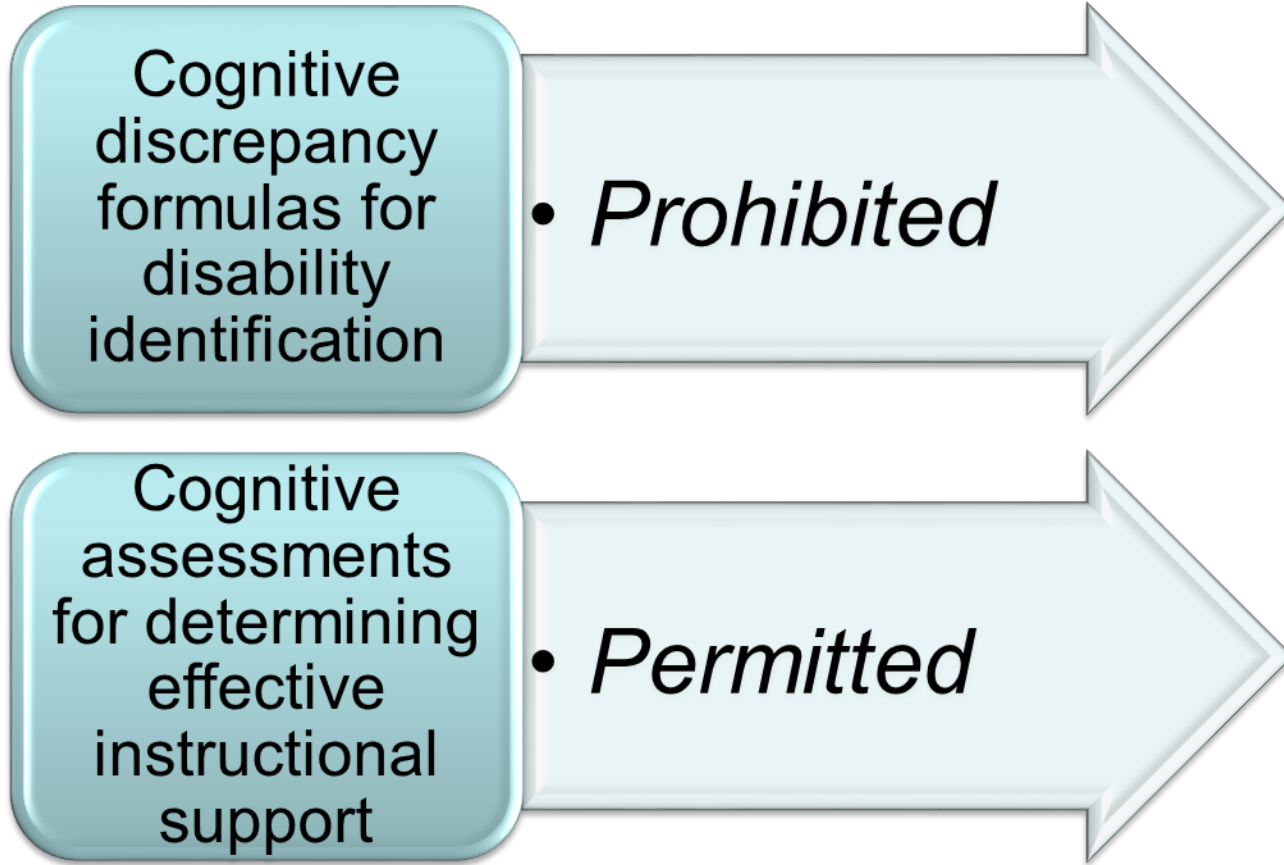
- What specific skills does the student need?
- Why has previous instruction or intervention been inadequate for this student?
- How can future instruction best meet their needs?



Removal of *Requirement* for Psychological Evaluation

- Assessment of cognitive functioning, which may include:
 - Intelligence
 - Memory
 - Reasoning
 - Problem Solving
 - Attending
 - Processing
- May also include additional assessments of:
 - educational performance
 - social/emotional/behavioral functioning
 - adaptive behavior
 - other





Diagnostic Processes

PURPOSE:

To assist in determining why a problem is occurring

- Not always a specific “test”
- May be informal or formal
- Includes multiple sources of data
- May already be available as existing data



Multiple Sources of Data

Review

- ✓ student work samples
- ✓ grades
- ✓ health records
- ✓ previous tests/reports
- ✓ office referrals
- ✓ other discipline data

Interview

- ✓ teachers
- ✓ parents
- ✓ counselors
- ✓ administrators
- ✓ the student
- ✓ others involved in the student's education

Observe

- ✓ learning environment
- ✓ student in specific, relevant settings (when problem is most likely/least likely to occur)
- ✓ informal observation
- ✓ systematic observation

Test

- ✓ universal screening
- ✓ curriculum-based measures (CBM)
- ✓ districtwide and state tests
- ✓ diagnostic assessments
- ✓ functional behavior assessments
- ✓ standardized assessments



(Strengthen the) Educational Evaluation

Educational Evaluation requirements:

- Related to *current educational program*- includes information regarding educational strengths and needs
- *Comprehensive* – using a full range of available instruments and observations
 - Including diagnostic tests and other appropriate formal and informal measures
- *Conducted by* a licensed teacher or other appropriate professional who has been trained on the administration of the assessment
- Measures the child's progress in learning and skill acquisition



Examples of Diagnostic Assessments- Math

Formal

- Key Math-3 Diagnostic Assessment
- Test of Early Math Abilities-3
- Tools for Early Assessment in Math

Informal

- Assessing Math Concepts
- Number Knowledge Test



Developmental Progressions

- Diagnostic assessment should sample multiple skills in an instructional sequence
- We need to understand the trajectory of skill development to know what skills a student has and does not have so we can begin instruction at the correct level- point of entry



An example-

Counting and Cardinality

1. Knows number names & counting sequence
2. Counts with 1:1 correspondence to tell the number of objects
 - touch one counter each time they say a number
 - touch each item once (and only once)
 - react if the number they end up with does not make sense
 - respond to “how many” without recounting
3. Counts small sets of items
 - line
 - circle
 - scattered array



Examples of Diagnostic Assessments- Literacy

Formal

- Gray Oral Reading Test-5 (GORT5)
- Test of Word Reading Efficiency-2 (TOWRE2)
- Word Identification and Spelling Test (WIST)
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP2)

Informal

- Phonics Survey
- DIBELS Deep
- Work samples
- Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI)
- Words Their Way Spelling Inventory



Examples across all areas

- Student interviews
- Observations
- Program embedded assessments
- Survey level assessments
- Curriculum Based Measures
- Work samples

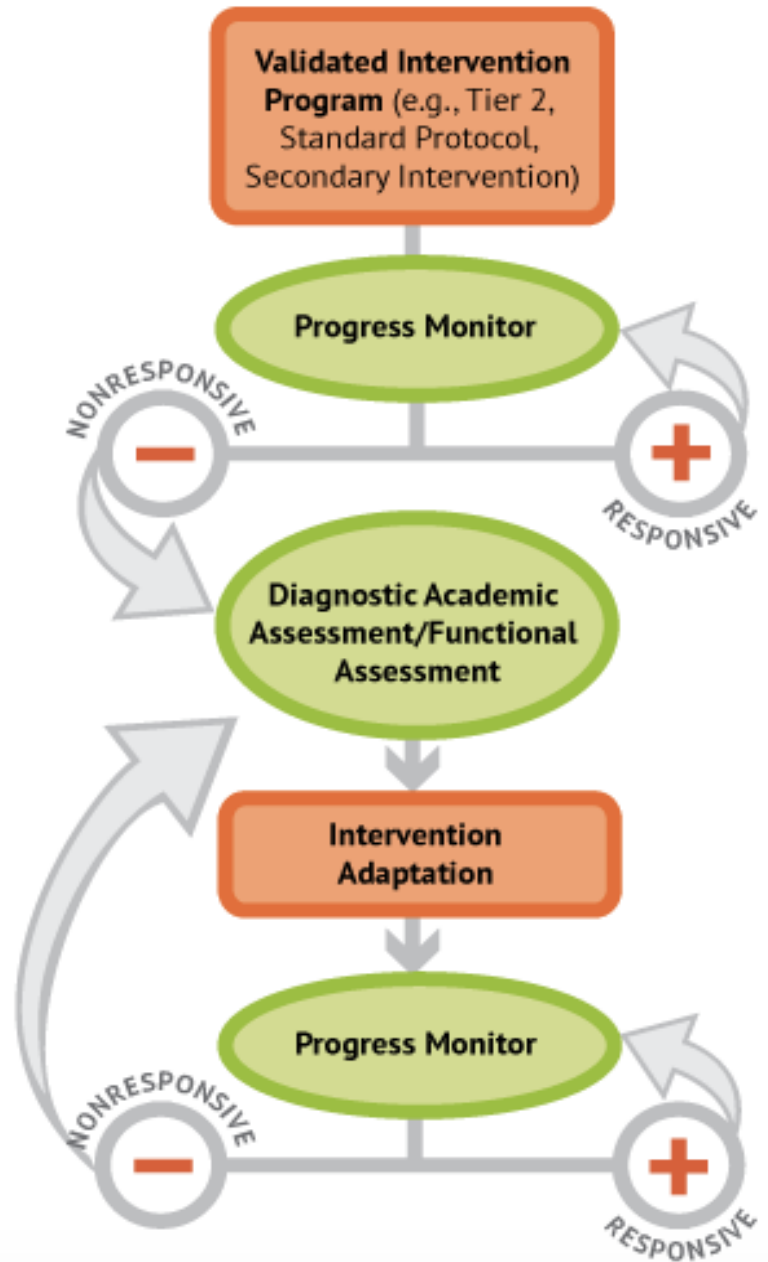


An evaluation *begins* with the review of *existing* data

“A school that has robust procedures for implementing MTSS will have collected during the provision of these supports a wide range of assessment data that *not only has informed instruction and intervention*, but can also be *used as important evidence* for special education eligibility decisions.”

The RTI Approach to Evaluating Learning Disabilities
Kovaleski, VanDerHeyden & Shapiro





Alex- 6th grade

- intervention in phonics, spelling and reading fluency
- word recognition accuracy is >95%
- multiple self-corrections, inconsistent prosody
- reading fluency rate 82 wcpm with minimal progress
- reading comprehension inconsistent
- listening comprehension and oral language skills average



What else do we need to know?

<p>Decoding skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of sound-symbol associations and application of this knowledge to pseudowords 	<p>Phonics survey</p>	<p>Letter sound knowledge Phonetically regular words Pseudowords</p>
<p>Spelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge of spelling rules and phonic and orthographic patterns of all six syllable types 	<p>Spelling inventory</p>	<p>Phonetically regular words of 6 syllable types Irregular words</p>
<p>Word recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognition of unfamiliar words out of context both for accuracy and automaticity 	<p>Graded word recognition survey (out of context reading)</p>	<p>Timed for fluency Untimed for accuracy</p>
<p>Reading in connected text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess word accuracy, automaticity, prosody and comprehension of connected text 	<p>Informal reading inventory Unfamiliar passages from classroom texts</p>	<p>Sample back from grade level to identify comprehension of independent and instructional level</p>

Evaluation Planning

- Evaluation team reviews what is known about the child (existing data)
- Team determines diagnostic information/ additional information is needed to answer referral questions
- Team completes an evaluation plan
- Parental consent is obtained



A final thought...

- The evaluation of a child for consideration of special education is a complex process that requires:
 - What is known about the child (existing data)
 - What needs to be collected to answer questions (evaluation plan)
- The questions to be answered include determining:
 - Whether an IDEA disability exists
AND (more importantly)
 - The instruction needed to support progress within the general education curriculum



Resources

[MTSS Comprehensive Assessment Guidelines](#)

[MTSS Livebinder](#)

[SLD Eligibility Guidance](#)

[SLD Fact Sheets/ MTSS wikispace](#)

[National Center on Intensive Intervention](#)

