

Keeping Students First: Special Education Services and Supports within Georgia's Tiered System of Supports

Division for Special Education Services and Supports,
Georgia's Tiered System of Supports,
and Federal Programs, Title III, Part A

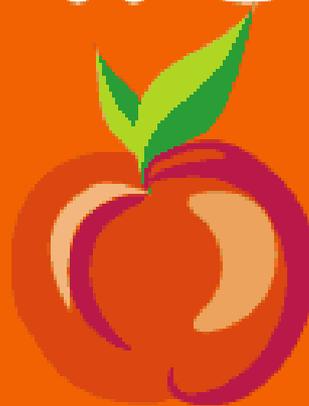
January 2020

Vision 2020

Provide the necessary infrastructure and supports for leaders, teachers, and families to meet the whole child needs of each student and improve student outcomes and school climate resulting in increased quality of life and a workforce ready future.



Keeping Students First



MTSS, RTI, SST, etc. How do they align?



- **PBIS:** Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- **RTI:** Response to Intervention
- **SST:** Student Support Team
- **SMH:** Student Mental Health
- **WRAP:** Wraparound Services
- **Other Supports and Services**

MTSS, SST and RTI – Are these terms synonymous?

- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports** - a **system** or framework that integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavioral problems. It promotes systems alignment to increase efficiency and effectiveness of resources. *(Adopted from Center on Response to Intervention, 2010)*
- **Response to Intervention (RTI)** - a **process** in which schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities. *(Center on Response to Intervention)*
- **Student Support Team (SST)** - an interdisciplinary **team** or group that uses a systematic process to address learning and/or behavior problems of students, K-12, in a school. SST is unique to Georgia. *(Georgia Department of Education)*

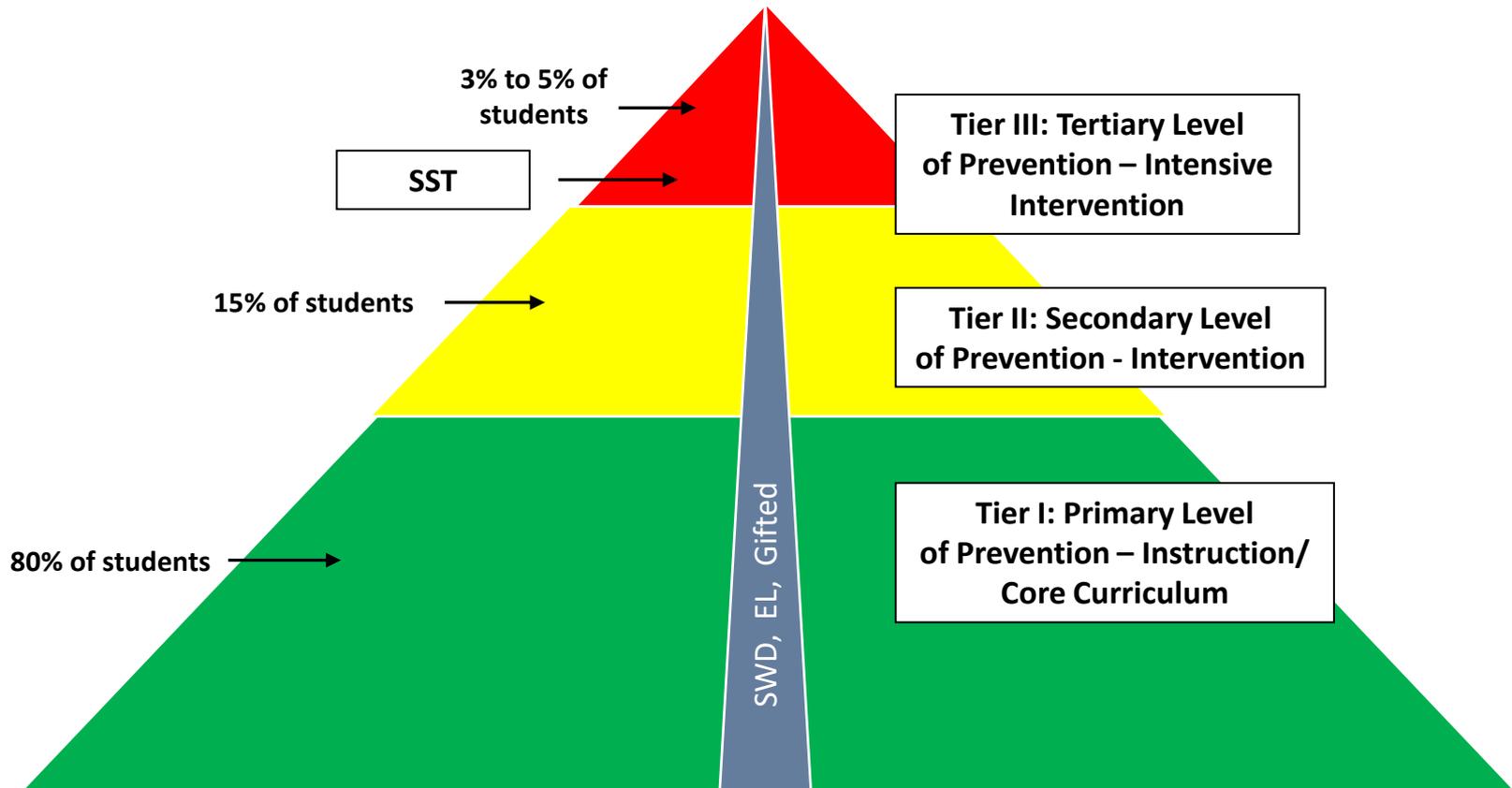
SST and RTI in the MTSS Process

- Under the framework of Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students, RTI and SST are still both a part of the MTSS process.
- Georgia's pyramid is now composed of only three tiers.
- RTI is embedded in the data-based decision-making component and remains a part of the multi-level prevention system. It is also included in the screening and progress monitoring components.
- Under the MTSS framework, SST is initiated at Tier III.

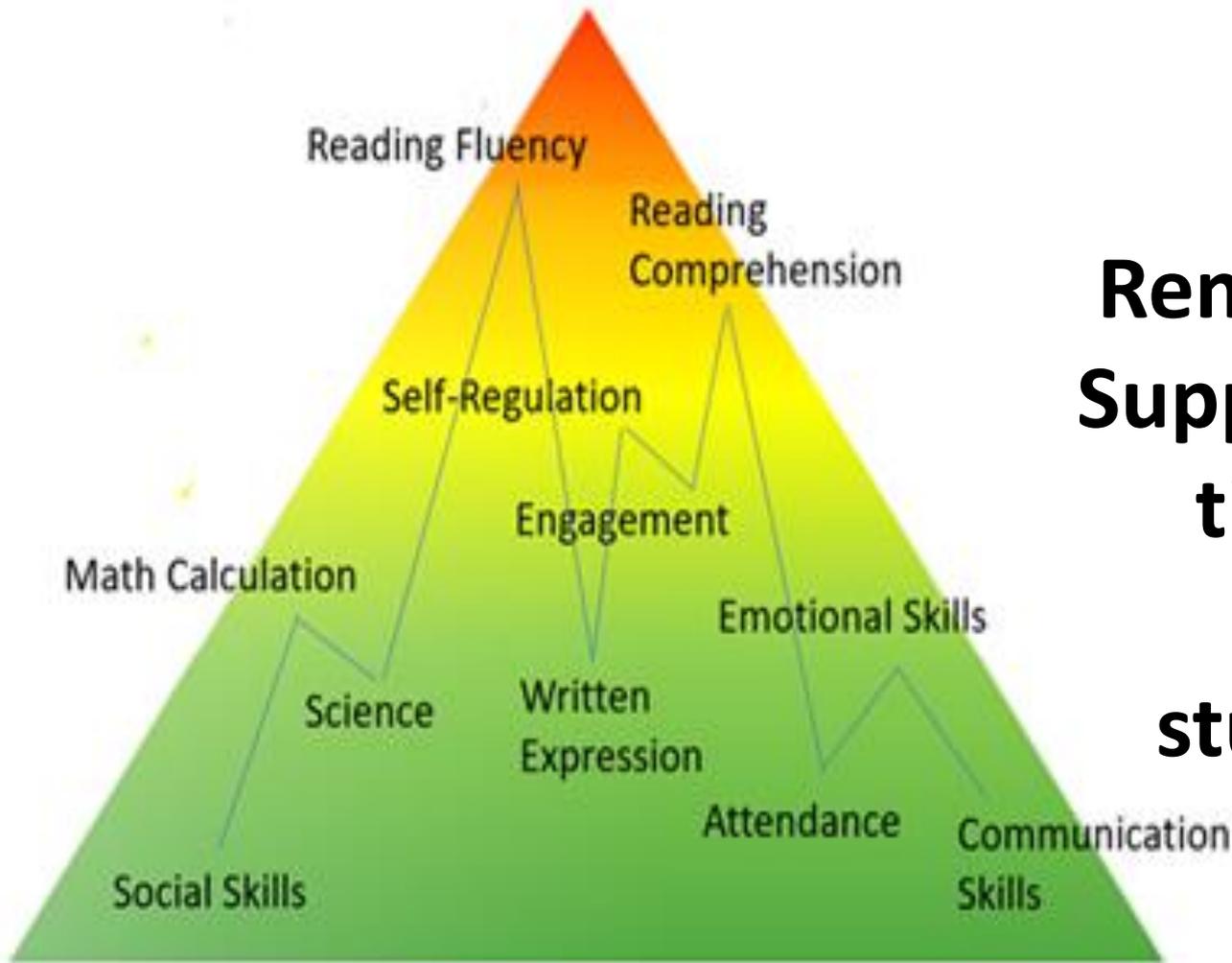
Essential Components of Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students

- **Screening**
- **Progress Monitoring**
- **Multi-Level Prevention System**
 - Tier I: Primary Level – Instruction/Core Curriculum
 - Tier II: Secondary Level - Intervention
 - Tier III: Tertiary Level - Intensive Intervention
- **Data-Based Decision Making**
 - Identify instructional needs for academics and/or behavior
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of core curriculum, instruction, interventions and the framework
 - Determine movement within the multi-level system
- **Infrastructure**

Georgia's Multi-Level Prevention System



Students receive services at all levels, depending on need.



**Remember:
Supports are
tiered,
NOT
students**

**Students receive services at all levels,
depending on need.**

Agenda:

**English Learners and
Students with Disabilities:
Factors to Consider When a Disability is
Suspected**

MTSS/SST Platform

**Update on Vision and Hearing
Screenings**

Guidance: Parents

English Learners and Students with Disabilities: Factors to Consider When a Disability is Suspected



Georgia™

FTE-1 – October 2019

Number of Students in Georgia = 1,769,621

Number of Students with Disabilities = 225,062 (12.7%)

Number of English Learners = 128,503 (7%)

Number of EL/SWD = 18,989

- Students with Disabilities (SWD) represent 12.7% of the total PK-12 population.
- Of the SWD population, 8% are dually identified as EL/SWD.

MTSS and English Learners

- Although research concerning evidence-based interventions for ELs is limited, there is a growing knowledge base suggesting that multi-tiered supports benefit ELs who are struggling.
 - Source: Mathes, Pollard-Durodola, Cárdenas-Hagan, Linan-Thompson, Vaughn (2007); Rivera, Moughamian, Lesaux, Francis (2009); Sun, Nam, Vanderwood (2010)
- These timely supports may help ELs ‘catch up’ and prevent unnecessary and inaccurate diagnosis of learning disabilities.

Using a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Multi-tiered Model

- Ensures that no group of students is overrepresented or underrepresented in supplemental or intensive interventions
- Culturally responsive models consider many factors such as: lack of English proficiency and how that may affect student scores on screening and progress-monitoring measures

Using a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Multi-tiered Model

- Assessing students in a linguistically responsive manner requires procedures that:
 - Assess strengths and needs of individual ELs and groups of ELs
 - Identify ELs at risk of reading failure
 - Provides native-language and/or English literacy instruction and intervention based on identified needs and progress-monitoring data
 - Incorporates multi-sources and data points
- Source: Project ELITE, Project ESTRELLA, & Project REME. (2015). *Effective Practices for English Learners: Brief 2, Assessment and Data-Based Decision-Making*. Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

Embracing Multiculturalism



© Dixons

An English Learner is currently receiving ESOL services, but his teachers feel his difficulties may not solely be explained by his language background.

- Understand what communication skills look like in the student's native language
- Seek parental input
- Gain insights from the ESOL teacher on the student's instructional language proficiency and cultural/experiential backgrounds

Is your MTSS/SST team well informed of next steps when considering if an English Learner may also be suspected of having a disability?

- Understand the student's communication skills in his/her first language.
- Testing in English only is not enough if a student is still learning his/her second language.
- Establishing a pattern of deficits that is demonstrated in the student's native language is necessary in addition to documented difficulties in academic and English language tasks.

Start with Parental Input when Collecting First Language Information

Determine comfort level and preference

- Language spoken in the home
- Developmental history for the student including motor and language milestones in the native language as well as educational and medical history
- Previous evaluations
- Length of time the student has been exposed to English
- Language the student most often uses with friends and parents
- Language the student prefers to watch TV, listen to music or read
- Language the student uses with friends and adults outside the home

Taking the Next Step

A Speech-Language Pathologist will gather additional data from the parents via survey or interview about specific skills of the student's first language. Some skills include:

- Use of various types of sentence structures
- Initiate and formulate questions
- Categorize and understand how words are related
- Repair communication breakdowns
- Initiate and maintain conversations
- Understand and use figurative language

An SLP can determine if the student has impaired language skills in the native language as well as second language.



Evaluating English Learners for a Suspected Disability

IDEA and Section 504

- Contains regulatory provisions addressing evaluation of limited English proficient students.
- IDEA Part B (34 CFR 300.29)
 - Native Language – Language normally used by the parents of the child
 - All direct contact with the child (including the evaluation of the child) must be in the language normally used by the child in the home or learning environment.
 - Evaluations and assessments must be conducted in the language normally used by the child and administered by qualified personnel.

Evaluations for IDEA Eligibility

- Must measure the student's disability related deficits and needs –not their English-speaking ability.
 - Houston Independent School District, 30 IDELR 564 (SEA TX 1999) – Upheld the district's decision to conduct the evaluation of native Spanish-speaking student in English where the results of the language dominance testing indicated higher levels of receptive and expressive proficiency in English than in Spanish.

Section 504 - Evaluations

- 504 regulations do not ***explicitly*** require an evaluation to be administered in the student's native language; however, 34CFR 104.35 (b) (3) and case law Louisa County (VA) Pub. Schs., 115 LRP 4506 (OCR 11/17/14) found that the district discriminated against several students on the basis of disability by misclassifying their disabilities due to evaluation that reflected lack of English language skills rather than disability needs.

Evaluations – Social Struggles

- Examine social communication norms in the student's first language
 - Tone, volume and rate for verbal interaction and nonverbal communication vary based on the student's native language and culture.
 - Stress and intonation can be language specific.
 - Eye contact and personal space may be functions of the student's native culture.
 - Ensure the team does not mistake cultural differences for a social language disability.

Evaluations – Social Struggles

- Seek input from caregivers.
- Learn about engagement in the student's native language and with familiar conversation partners.
- Observe the student in the school setting
 - Consider if the student really has social language deficits or if the student has not had enough exposure to the new language nuances to define certain aspects independently.
 - Through observation, look for the student's ability to make inferences –such as lining up when the other students do – or facing the teacher when appropriate.

Assessment Procedures for English Learners

- Assessment procedures for ELs are similar to typical multi-tiered models; however, differences include:
 - attending to bias
 - reducing the misconception that behaviors typical of second-language acquisition are disability indicators
 - appropriately interpreting assessment results when making instructional decisions.
 - Source: (Hoover & Klingner, 2011)

Talking with Parents of English Learners about Special Education

English Learners: Tips for Discussing Special Education

- Reach out to parents during general education interventions
 - The first time you discuss a concern with the parent should not be when you are requesting permission to evaluate.
- Use parent friendly language
- Do not assume that parents understand the American school system
- Understand the culture's view of a disability
 - If the culture's view is thought to place responsibility on the mother, the family may be resistant to their child having a label.
 - Approach with cultural competency

English Learners and Students with Disabilities

EL/SWD

- If a student with a disability is screened for English language status eligibility, appropriate accommodations must be provided for the English language proficiency (ELP) screening assessment.
 - Addendum to September 23, 2016, Non-Regulatory Guidance, 119 LRP 714 (EDU 01/02/19)

English Learners and Students with Disabilities

A webpage with resources for English Learners and Students with Disabilities has been added to the Division for Special Education Services and Supports homepage. See link on the right side of the homepage under **Resources**.

The webpage can also be accessed using the link below:

<https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/English-Learners---Students-with-Disabilities.aspx>

Other Presentation Sources:

- LRP Publications, Special Education Connection 2019
- Developing a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Approach to Response to Instruction & Intervention (RtI²) for English Language Learners, 2013, University of Wisconsin, WIDA Consortium

Georgia's Online MTSS/SST Application

Georgia's Online MTSS/SST Application

This application is a tool that:

- helps districts and schools create, update, monitor, and maintain a record of a student's response to interventions.
- supports users' professional knowledge and development in data-based individualization.
 - Georgia is currently using this application for students receiving **Tier III** supports and interventions.
 - Applications for district participation will be collected beginning this January 2020.

Georgia's Online MTSS/SST Application: Overview

Accessible to all Georgia districts and is web-based

Provides real-time data

Allows transfer of student data if a student moves anywhere in Georgia

Aligns with Georgia's Online IEP (GO-IEP) application which is also a part of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)

Georgia's Online MTSS/SST Application: Design Features



Pulls pertinent data from the Statewide Longitudinal System (SLDS)



Offers search capabilities to open an individual student file



Permits users to create and maintain records that are unique, unduplicated, and permanent

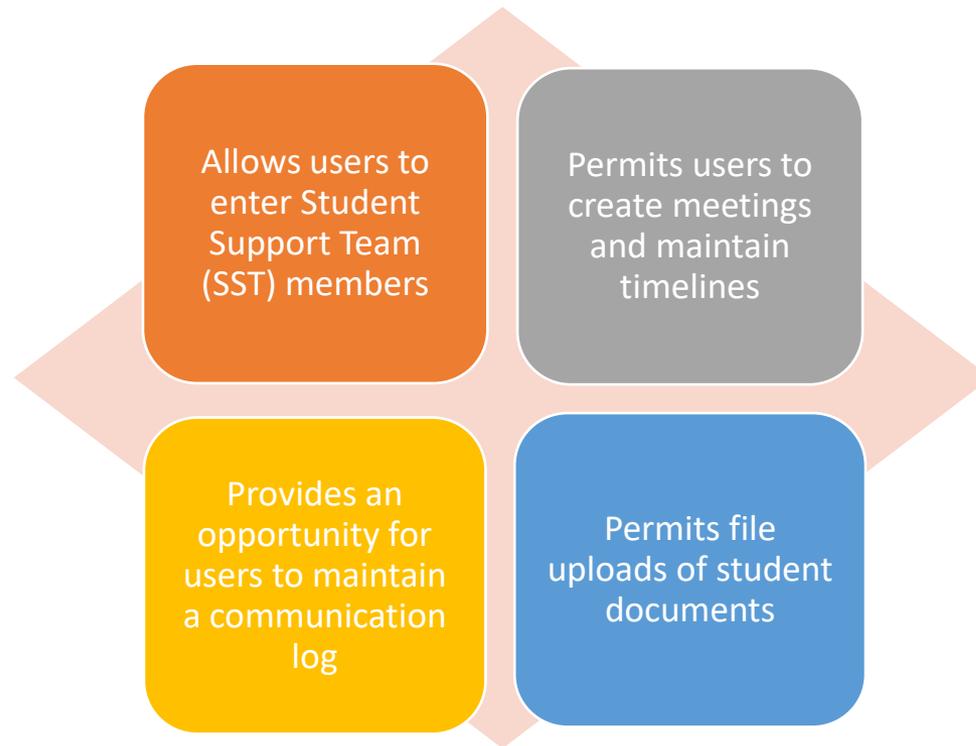


Allows users to enter intervention and progress monitoring data



Generates a printout of a student's educational plan

Georgia's Online MTSS/SST Application: Additional Design Features



Landing Page: Student Search

Active Case: [No Active Student] [Search Student](#) Caine, Jose ▾

Search Student

If you are unsure of the exact spelling of any information simply enter the first letter or letters of the name and search.

Personal Information	Location Information	Student Status
GTID	Select LEA Dundee School System ▾	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Active Students
First Name	Select School All Schools ▾	<input type="radio"/> Exited Students
Last Name br	By Team Lead	<input type="radio"/> New Students
Select Grades ▾	Select Team Lead ▾	

Search

[Lookup Student 🔍](#) [Start Over ↻](#)

Student Search Results

Student Name	Current GTID	School	Grade	DOB	Team Lead
 Brewer , Lily	9001110258	Mesilla Park Elem	05	Jul 18, 2007	Jose Caine

Student Profile

Active Case: Brewer, Lily [Search Student](#) Caine, Jose ▾

Profile | Team Members | Timelines | Meetings | SST | Log | Documents

Student & School | Parents/Guardians | Assessment Data

STUDENT
GTID# 9001110258

Team Lead
Jose Caine

School / LEA
Mesilla Park Elem / Dundee School System

Personal Information

<u>First Name</u> Lily	<u>Middle Name</u> L	<u>Last Name</u> Brewer	<u>Date of Birth</u> 7/18/07
<u>Gender</u> Male	<u>Race / Ethnicity</u>	<u>Grade</u> 05	<u>School Entry Date</u>

Update Grade

Demographic Information

English Learner No Yes

Student's native language

Other Language

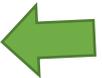
Enter Email

Enter Address Line1
 Enter Address Line2

Enter City
 Select State
 Enter Zip

Additional Information

- i. SST
- ii. 504
- iii. Community PK
- iv. Private School
- v. Alternative School
- vi. After-School Care
- vii. Others



In Progress

Training Resources

- Help Manual
 - Supports the use of the application
 - Facilitate professional learning and implementation of the Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students
- PowerPoints
 - Overview of the Georgia Online MTSS/SST Application
 - Navigation the Georgia Online MTSS/SST Application
- Short How-To-Videos

Vision and Hearing Screenings

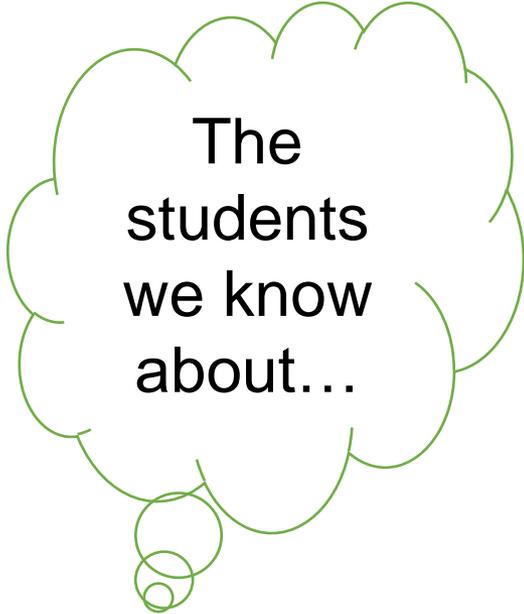


**I heard that my child must have a
passed hearing and vision first!
Is this correct?**



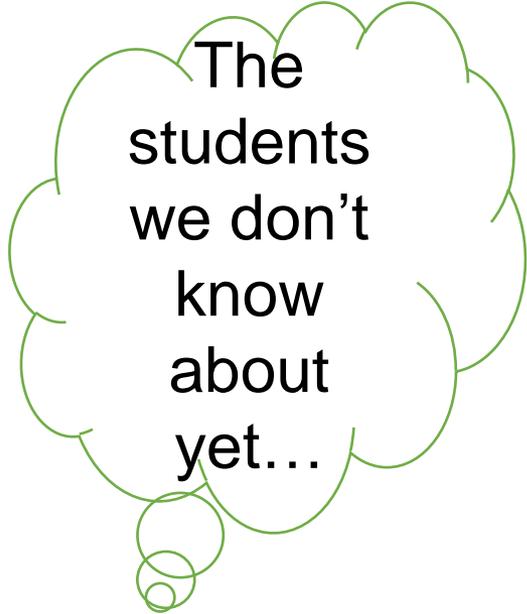
Under IDEA Evaluation Procedures, if an assessment is administered to a **child with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills**, the assessment results should **accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level** or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).

Children with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills can be grouped into two categories.



The students we know about...

AND



The students we don't know about yet...

While the Department continues to support the guidance below, the details are insufficient to describe a systemic, proactive response to identifying children with impaired sensory.

If problems with the child's hearing or vision need medical diagnosis or require the purchase of hearing aids or eyeglasses and the parents are unable to accomplish this, then the LEA must make sure that these devices and services are made available to the child.

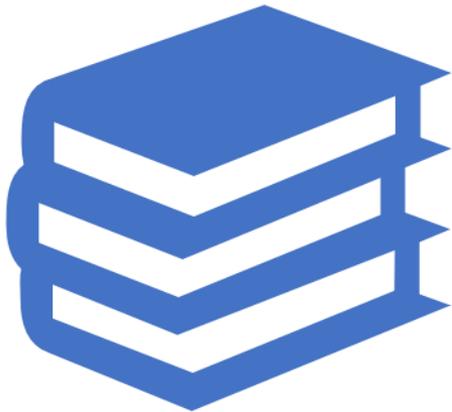
What if a child requires a medical diagnosis?

If problems with the child's hearing or vision need medical diagnosis or require the purchase of hearing aids or eyeglasses and the parents are unable to accomplish this, then the LEA must make sure that these devices and services are made available to the child.



Hearing & Vision Screenings

The Challenge



- Research shows that children with hearing or vision loss who are identified through mass hearing screenings and receive services earlier have better outcomes in language, literacy, and academics. However, there is shortage of services for follow-up identification, which can be a challenge for school districts.

Facts about Hearing & Vision Screenings

- Hearing and vision screenings improve access to the general education curriculum and increase student success.
- Mass screenings do not require parent permission.
- The prevalence of vision loss in school-age children is one in four children.
- The prevalence of hearing loss in children ages birth to five is 3 in 1000, but it goes up to 9 in 1000 for school-aged children.
- Hearing and vision screenings are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Georgia Department of Public Health for all school-aged children in Grades 1, 3, 5 and 8.
- Additionally, all students suspected of having a hearing or vision problem should be screened.

Facts about Hearing & Vision Screenings

- Georgia requires hearing and vision screenings in the following situations:
 - Upon school entry Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, And Nutrition Screening (3300 Form).
 - During the special education comprehensive evaluation process if suspected of having a disability in this area



Need More Help?

GA's New Mobile Audiology Program



Resources

- GA DOE – Trainings for Hearing & Vision screenings
 - [Webinars for Hearing & Vision screenings](#)
 - [Training manual for hearing screenings](#)
 - Division of State Schools
 - DHH Outreach Coordinator: Vanessa Robisch - VRobisch@doe.k12.ga.us
 - VI Outreach Coordinator: Zelma Murray - ZMurray@doe.k12.ga.us
- Georgia's (new) [Mobile Audiology Program](#)
 - Program Manager: Jessica Bergeron – jbergeron@doe.k12.ga.us
- [Early Childhood Hearing Outreach](#) (ECHO) (for children ages 3-5)
- [Prevent Blindness Georgia](#)
- Free or low-cost [glasses](#) & [hearing aids](#) for children



Guidance: Parents

Definition of Parent

- "Parent" means a biological parent, an adoptive parent, a person acting as a parent, a legal guardian, a surrogate parent, or a foster parent.
- "Person acting in the place of a parent" means a person such as a grandparent, a stepparent or other relative with whom the child lives, or a person other than a parent who is legally responsible for the welfare of a child.
- "Surrogate Parent" means an individual appointed by the LEA to make educational decisions regarding a FAPE of a child with a disability.
- "Guardian" means a person authorized to act as the child's parent and/or to make educational decisions, but it does not mean the State if the child is a ward of the State.

Surrogate Parents

A surrogate parent is needed when:

- no parent (as defined by the IDEA) can be identified;
- the LEA, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate a parent;
- the child is a ward of the State; or
- the child is an unaccompanied, homeless youth as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Surrogate Parents & LEAs Responsibilities

LEAs must have the following:

- A method for determining when a surrogate is needed
 - A method for assigning qualified surrogates
 - List of eligible persons to serve as surrogate parents
-
- Annual training for surrogate parents is strongly suggested.

Do all foster children need surrogates?

- No, the definition of parent in the IDEA and Georgia Special Education Rules allows foster parents to act as a parent for special education purposes.

Must a surrogate be used when a parent refuses to attend an IEP Team meeting?

- No, a surrogate must be appointed only when his or her parents cannot be identified or located, if the child is a ward of the state, or for unaccompanied homeless youth.
 - 34 C.F.R. § 300.519(a)(1) – (a)(4)

IDEA Parent Participation Reminders

- Early notification
- Mutually agreeable time and location
- If parents are not in attendance, use other methods to ensure participation
- Make and document reasonable efforts to ensure parent involvement

“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents.”
- Jane D. Hull

When parents are divorced, are both parties entitled to attend the IEP Team meeting?

- As an initial matter, the IDEA requires that an LEA ensure at least one parent is present or afforded the opportunity to participate in IEP Team meetings. See 34 C.F.R. § 300.322(a). However, when parents are divorced, the parental rights under IDEA apply to both parents unless a court order or state law specifies otherwise. See Letter to Biondi, 29 IDELR 972 (OSEP 1997); Letter to Serwecki, 44 IDELR 8 (OSEP 2005). This also applies to separated parents. See Letter to Best, 30 IDELR 145 (OSEP 1998).

May an LEA conduct an IEP Team meeting without a parent in attendance?

- After multiple attempts to contact the parent using multiple formats, the LEA is unable to convince the parent to attend, the LEA may conduct the IEP Team meeting without the parent. The LEA should keep detailed records of any letters, telephone calls, and/or visits to the parent. If attempts to ensure parental participation do not result in parent attendance, a copy of the IEP must be sent to the parent in a timely manner.

IDEA Procedural Safeguards/Parent Rights Document

- Given at least once per school year
- Also, must be given:
 - Upon initial referral or parent request for evaluation
 - Upon receipt of the first state complaint and first due process hearing request in a school year
 - Upon notification by the LEA to the parent of a disciplinary removal that constitutes a change of placement
 - Prior to accessing a child's or a parent's public benefits or insurance for the first time
 - Upon parent request

IDEA Parental Consent

- Informed written consent is required for the following:
 - To conduct an initial evaluation
 - To conduct a reevaluation
 - For the initial provision of special education and related services
 - Before disclosure of personally identifiable information that is subject to confidentiality

IDEA Parental Consent Reminders

- Consent for initial evaluation does NOT provide consent for initial provision of special education and related services
- Parent may revoke consent
 - Must be in writing
 - For ALL special education and related services, not for individual services
 - LEA must provide prior written notice

IDEA Transfer of Rights

- On or before a student's 17th birthday, the LEA is to inform the parent and the student that at age 18 the student attains the age of majority in Georgia and will become his or her own educational decision maker.
- LEA should send notices to both parent and student at 18, but the student will provide informed written consent when needed.
- LEA should inform parent and student of other options and resources.
- Under IDEA, parent retains the rights to all notices of meetings, changes in program or placement, and notices of evaluations.

Questions



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