

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA

- 6000 SPECIAL EDUCATION - INSTRUCTION

- 6100 IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

- 6111 Assessment, Identification, and Placement of Emotionally Disturbed Students

Referral

Referral of students suspected of being ED shall be accomplished in accordance with Santa Barbara County Special Education Local Plan Area procedures as outlined in the current edition of the SBCSELPA Procedural Handbook.

(Note: A current DSM diagnosis shall not be used to either include or exclude a student from consideration for special education services.)

Assessment

1. The assessment of referred students shall be accomplished in accordance with State and Federal guidelines and Santa Barbara County Special Education Local Plan Area procedures as outlined in the current edition of the SBCSELPA Procedural Handbook. Following these guidelines will ensure that each individual is assessed by individuals who are competent to perform assessments in all areas of suspected disability and will take into account each student's language and cultural background. The assessor(s) will write a report documenting their assessment.

2. Assessment Standards. The comprehensive assessment undertaken shall include the following:
 - a. Development and health history.

 - b. Educational history, including history of previous educational and behavior interventions.

 - c. Teacher interviews, including past and present teachers whenever possible.

 - d. Parent interview and, if possible, a home visit.

 - e. Observation in a variety of settings and student work samples.

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- f. Current* evaluation of:
 - (1) Intellectual functioning
 - (2) Language
 - (3) Adaptive behavior
 - (4) Academic skills
 - (5) Emotional functioning to include: appearance, behavior, affect, perception and cognition
 - (6) Psychomotor development

*Assessments of cognitive functioning conducted within the past twelve months and all other assessments conducted within the past six months may be considered current based upon professional judgment.

- g. A review of school records, including health and discipline, and of previous psychoeducational and psychological evaluations

3. Assessment Report. When the evaluation indicates that a student qualifies as ED according to state and federal education guidelines, the psychologist's report shall verify the following:

- a. Documentation that the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time (at least six months) and to a marked degree, addressing both a pervasiveness (across all domains) and intensity, which adversely affects educational performance:
 - (1) An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
 - (2) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
 - (3) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances exhibited in several situations.
 - (4) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

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- (5) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
 - b. Documentation of the linkage between the specific behavioral characteristics observed and the specific eligibility criteria affected.
 - c. Documentation of a behavioral or emotional condition that cannot be described solely as a social maladjustment as demonstrated by deliberate noncompliance with accepted social rules, and a demonstrated ability to control unacceptable behavior, and the absence of a treatable mental disorder.
 - d. A student who is a danger to self or others is not automatically eligible as emotionally disturbed.
4. When the child has been suspected of being ED and the assessment does not indicate eligibility as an ED student, the report shall:
 - a. Specify the rationale for not meeting the ED eligibility criteria, and
 - b. Specify the conditions which appear to have produced the behaviors in question.
5. When a child has been suspected of being ED and the assessment is inconclusive, a referral may be made through the SBCSELPA Executive Director for a second opinion.

IEP Development

When an IEP team has determined that a student is eligible for special education as ED, the IEP shall contain long term goals and short range objectives, as appropriate, that address all areas of need as required by law. These objectives shall be written so as to produce measurable outcomes.

Placement of ED Students in Special Education Programs

1. When placing a child identified as ED into a special education program, the full

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continuum of options shall be considered and the child shall be placed in the least restrictive environment appropriate to his/her educational needs.

2. A recommendation for residential placement shall be made only after less restrictive alternatives have been attempted unless it is clearly infeasible to do so. All attempted interventions or their infeasibility must be documented.
3. Residential placement shall be recommended only when such placement is necessary to appropriately implement the student's IEP.
4. Prior to recommending a student for residential placement the SBCSELPA Executive Director shall ensure that resources within the SELPA have been exhausted.

(EDUCATION CODE 56195.7(d))

DATE APPROVED: April 8, 1987

DATE REVISED: December 10, 1993

DATE REVISED: March 3, 1995

DATE REVISED: December 12, 1997

DATE REVISED: December 9, 2002

DATE REVISED: December 14, 2009

DATE REVISED: June 3, 2013