requirement for TBI under IDEA:

1. medical documentation of an event likely to have caused a TBI
2. assessment results that demonstrate that the student needs specially designed instruction to benefit from the educational environment

Additionally, some states require that the student have a demonstrated change from pre-injury performance to qualify for special education services under the category of TBI.

The U.S. DOE does little to guide school systems in their efforts to identify or screen students for TBI. Similarly, little guidance is provided on how to establish eligibility for section 504 services. Requiring medical documentation of TBI for students to be eligible for special education services or 504 plans can be a barrier to effective identification and service delivery.

Students/Parents may lack documentation because:

• they never sought medical attention following a TBI;
• medical documentation is unavailable (e.g., in the case of foster, adoptive, or migrant families);
• parents no longer have access to medical documentation - students who sustain a TBI at a young age may not experience its full effects until later in their education when academic and behavioral expectations increase.

In lieu of medical documentation, states may consider developing and implementing a screening, identification, and assessment protocol.

**Topic Links:**