

**SI Eligibility in Texas**  
**Texas Speech Language Hearing Association**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Are there special requirements for documenting a communication disorder in children who are English learners?

IDEA regulations specify that “assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under [IDEA] are provided and administered in the child’s native language or mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer” (34CFR §300.304 (c)(1)(ii)).

This requirement guides the evaluation of English learners. If possible, conduct assessments in the child’s native language. If that is not possible, use a native language speaker to interpret during the assessment. The objective is to gather enough information to discern and document a communication disorder in the child’s native language. If the child does not have a communication disorder in his/her native language, it is likely s/he will not be eligible for services under the eligibility category of SI.

2. What is the essence of SI eligibility determination in Texas?

A student is eligible for speech-language pathology services through IDEA 2004 and in Texas when s/he exhibits a speech impairment (i.e. communication disorder) that has an adverse effect on educational performance to the degree that specially designed instruction or related services and supports are needed from the SLP to help the student make progress in the general education curriculum.

Determination of eligibility for IEP services with a speech impairment is a three stage process that involves collecting data to answer:

- Is there a disability condition (i.e. communication disorder)?
- Is there an adverse effect on academic achievement or functional performance (i.e. educational performance) resulting from the communication disorder?
- If so, are specially designed instruction and/or related services and supports needed from the SLP to help the student make progress in the general education curriculum?

3. What are the guidelines when the SLP's information is not in agreement with the parent's or teacher's concerns?

When there is conflicting assessment data and some information is indicative of a communication disorder and other information is not, the SLP and multidisciplinary team should conduct additional testing and gather additional information through informal measures to bring conflicting data into alignment.

4. What should the SLP do when additional concerns are noted during the evaluation window?

IDEA regulations specify that the child is "assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities" (34CFR § 300.304 (c)(4)).

In addition, IDEA regulations require that the evaluation of the child be comprehensive enough "to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs..." (34CFR § 300.304 (c)(6)).

These two requirements indicate that when additional concerns are noted during the evaluation window they should be addressed. This should start with communication with the parent to obtain informed consent for the testing in the additional areas of concern.

5. Is intervention through RTI *required* before referral for speech-language evaluation?

This is a local district decision.

IDEA regulations require that "as part of an initial evaluation and as part of any reevaluation, the team must review evaluation data on the child, including evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child; current classroom-based, local, or State assessments, and classroom-based observations; and observations by teachers and related service providers" (34CFR § 300.305 (a)(1)).