

DEFINITION – INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Sec. 300.8) states that an intellectual disability “means significantly subaverage functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.”

According to the ECEA 2.08 (4), a child with an Intellectual Disability “shall have reduced general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which prevents the child from receiving reasonable educational benefit from general education.”

To be eligible as a child with an Intellectual Disability, there must be evidence of **each** of the following criteria:

- (1) A full-scale score of 2.0 or more standard deviations (SD) below the mean on individually administered measures of cognition; **and**
- (2) A comprehensive adaptive skills assessment based on a body of evidence that reflects the child’s social, linguistic and cultural background. The level of independent adaptive behavior is significantly below the culturally imposed expectations of personal and social responsibility. The body of evidence shall include results from each of the following:
 - a. A full-scale score of 2.0 or more SD below the mean on a standard or nationally normed assessment of adaptive behavior;
 - b. An interview of parents; **and**
 - c. Observations of the child’s adaptive behavior that must occur in more than one educational setting. A discrepancy must occur in two or more domains related to adaptive behavior in more than one educational setting.

- (3) An Intellectual Disability as described above, prevents the child from receiving reasonable educational benefit from general education, as evidenced by the following criteria:
- a. A deficiency in academic achievement, either as indicated by scores of 2.0 or more SD below the mean in a formal measure of language, reading, and math, or a body of evidence on informal measures when it is determined that reliable and valid assessment results are not possible due to the student's functioning level.

LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IDENTIFIED WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

The student may exhibit:

1. Difficulties in communicating efficiently and effectively that effect self-determination, behavior, social interactions and participation in multiple learning environments.
2. Alternate methods of demonstrating his/her abilities and knowledge.
3. Uneven learning patterns in all domains including cognition, communication, socialization and self-help.
4. Multiple disabling conditions that may occur concurrently with an intellectual disability, including physical or orthopedic impairments, and/or sensory impairments/challenges.
5. Medical needs that impact health, stamina and engagement in learning tasks.
6. Difficulty learning new tasks, maintaining new skills, and generalizing skills to new environments.
7. Difficulty demonstrating problem solving skills when new skills or information is presented in a traditional academic curriculum.
8. Individualized methods of accessing information and demonstrating knowledge in alternative ways (tactile, visual, auditory, and multi-sensory).

(Adapted from the Guidance Document: Significant Cognitive Disabilities from the Virginia Department of Education, October 6, 2009.)

WHAT IS ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR?

Adaptive behavior refers to the domains and skills that people need to function independently at home, at school, and in the community.

Adaptive behavior skills include:

- **Communication:** Interacting with others, using expressive and receptive language, writing, and listening, etc.
- **Self-Care:** Eating, dressing, hygiene, toileting, grooming, etc.
- **Home Living:** Caring for clothes, housekeeping, performing property maintenance, preparing food, cooking, budgeting, etc.
- **Social:** Getting along with others, being aware of other people's feelings, forming relationships.
- **Motor:** Fine motor, gross motor, sensory motor, etc.
- **Practical Academics:** Literacy and numeracy, etc.
- **Community:** Accessing the community, transportation, shopping, safety, medical, etc.

Why is adaptive behavior assessed?

The adaptive behavior assessment helps identify specific skills that are strengths, as well as, areas of need to be taught to the student. Acquisition of adaptive behavior skills can impact a person's daily life, level of independence and affect his or her ability to respond to particular situations or to the environment throughout their lives. Adaptive behavior skills are as important to a student's success as are academic skills.

How are adaptive behavior data gathered?

Any assessment of adaptive skills focuses on how well children can function and maintain themselves independently and how well they meet the personal and social demands outlined for them by their cultures. "School psychologists and other assessment personnel must be conscientious about the relevance of the expectations they use as the comparison standard. Even when norm-referenced adaptive measures have been translated, this does not ensure that the items are culturally relevant or appropriate. For instance, young Asian male children may not button their clothing or tie their shoes

because they expect their mothers to do it for them. This is just one example to illustrate that adaptive behaviors are culturally and experientially based. While the results of norm-referenced, standardized adaptive measures might be appropriate for program planning to help the students meet mainstream American expectations, by themselves these data would not be appropriately used to determine if students have an intellectual disability” (National Association of School Psychologists, Communiqué Handout 2010, p. 6).

A limitation in adaptive skills must be assessed to be sure that it is a result of an adaptive behavior rather than the result of sensory, health or physical limitations.

A comprehensive adaptive skills assessment is based on a body of evidence that reflects the child’s social, linguistic and cultural background. The measurement of adaptive behavior typically includes surveys of the child’s behavior and skills in a variety of settings, including his or her classroom, school, home, and neighborhood or community by trained personnel. Because it is not possible for one person to observe a child in all of the key environments, measurement of adaptive behavior should depend on the feedback from a number of people.

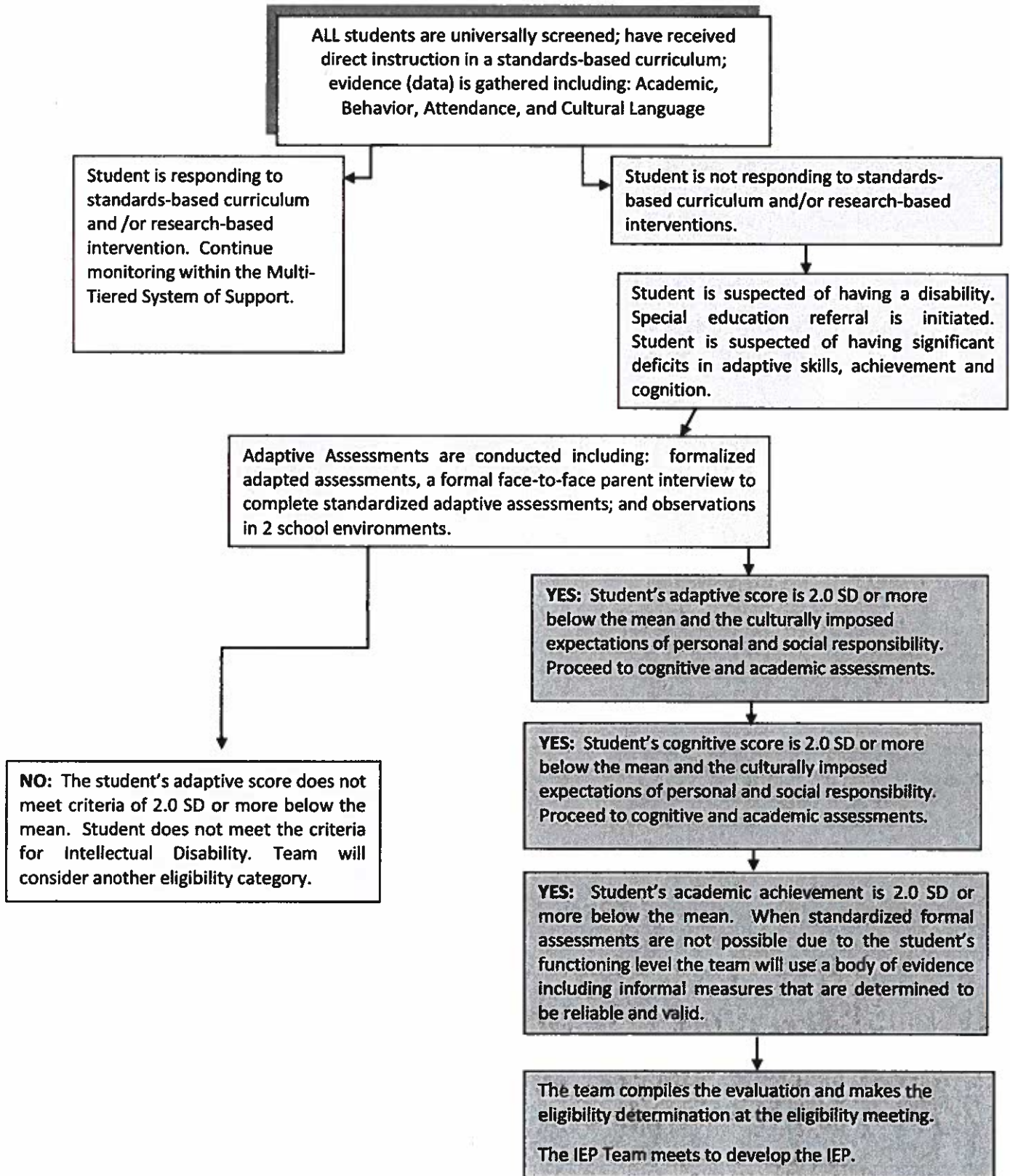
Parents have many chances to observe their child in a variety of settings; thus they are usually the best sources of information about adaptive behavior. The most common method for gathering information about a child’s adaptive behavior skills in the home environment is to have a school social worker, school psychologist, guidance counselor, someone who is trained to use the assessment, interview the parent using a formal adaptive behavior assessment rating scale. Adaptive behavior information is also obtained from school personnel who work with the student in order to understand how the child functions in the school environment.

The body of evidence should include results from each of the following:

- A nationally normed assessment of adaptive behavior in school environment and home/ community which may include but is not limited to:
 - School personnel interview/survey
 - Parent Interview

- A structured, face to face parent interview utilizing formal adaptive behavioral assessment by an individual trained to administer such an instrument (Education F. D., 2004)
- In case of linguistic difference provide an interpreter
- In the event of extenuating circumstances where a parent is unavailable, primary care givers who are knowledgeable of the student's adaptive functioning may be interviewed
- Observation(s)
 - Of the student's adaptive behavior that must occur in more than one educational setting (i.e., classroom, play ground, cafeteria, etc.).
 - Should be conducted by a designated member of the Multidisciplinary Team that has been trained in observational methods (methodology), such as a school psychologist or social worker. Someone other than the classroom or special education teacher should conduct the observations in their respective classrooms.
 - Is/are conducted to determine differences in the student's adaptive behavior skills across a variety of environments.

FLOW CHART FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY



DEFINITION – MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Sec. 300.8) states that “Multiple disabilities means concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness or mental retardation-orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. Multiple disabilities does not include deaf-blindness.”

Definition: A child with Multiple Disabilities shall have two or more areas of significant impairment, one of which shall be an Intellectual Disability. The other areas of impairment include: Orthopedic Impairment; Visual Impairment, including Blindness; Hearing Impairment, including Deafness; Speech or Language Impairment; Serious Emotional Disability; Autism Spectrum Disorder; Traumatic Brain Injury; or Other Health Impaired. The combination of such impairments creates a unique condition that is evidenced through a multiplicity of severe educational needs, which prevent the child from receiving reasonable benefit from general education. *(Include determination of eligibility form for each disability considered.)*

To be eligible as a child with Multiple Disabilities, there must be evidence that satisfies all eligibility criteria for intellectual disability AND each other identified area of impairment. Documentation for each identified eligibility category must be included in the student’s IEP.

The multiple disabilities, as described above, prevent the child from receiving reasonable educational benefit from general education, as evidenced by **two or more** of the following criteria:

- Inability to comprehend and utilize instructional information; **and/or**
- Inability to communicate efficiently and effectively; **and/or**
- Inability to demonstrate problem solving skills when such information is presented in a traditional academic curriculum; **and/or**
- Inability to generalize skills consistently.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

Must a child have an intellectual disability in order to be eligible as a child with Multiple Disabilities?

Yes. One of the eligibility criteria requirements for this category is an identified intellectual disability.

Do all of the eligibility checklists for the areas that a child qualifies, need to be included?

Yes. There must be evidence that the student meets eligibility criteria for intellectual disability and any other eligibility category. Each of these eligibility categories met must have the corresponding Eligibility Checklist(s) included in the student's IEP.