

OPERATING PROCEDURES

DISABILITIES CATEGORIES

UT Tyler University Academy

212804

Template update May 2020

Related Resources:

[Autism](#)

[Deaf-Blindness](#)

[Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#)

[Emotional Disturbance](#)

[Intellectual Disability](#)

[Multiple Disabilities](#)

[Noncategorical Early Childhood](#)

[Orthopedic Impairment](#)

[Other Health Impairment](#)

[Specific Learning Disability](#)

[Speech or Language Impairment](#)

[Traumatic Brain Injury](#)

[Visual Impairment](#)

Broad Category: EVALUATION

PROCEDURES:

Autism

- When evaluating students for Autism, UT Tyler University Academy will consider the student's language skills as measured by a speech and language pathologist, social-emotional skills in both the home and school environments as rated on behavioral rating scales (including adaptive behavior), developmental history, a direct observation assessment of autism symptomology using tools such as the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, 2nd Edition or the Brief Observation of Symptoms of Autism, classroom observation(s), and when needed, an occupational therapist to consider sensory needs, and finally, cognitive and achievement testing are used to evaluate intellectual ability and academic skills.
- The qualified professionals who evaluate a student for autism will include a speech pathologist and a school psychologist. Evaluations may also include an educational diagnostician and occupational therapist. To identify members of the multi-disciplinary team, the evaluation team will review referral data collected from the multi-tiered system of support committee or from the parent and determine the necessary team members based on referral data.
- When conducting an initial evaluation for Autism, formal speech and language assessment, developmental history, sociological information, behavioral rating scales, observations, direct assessment of autism symptomology, classroom

observation(s), adaptive behavior, cognitive and achievement information, and assistive technology must be obtained. The evaluation will include specific recommendations for behavioral interventions and strategies. When a student has previously been identified as a student with Autism by his/her doctor, information from the medical evaluation will be considered. Reevaluation needs will be determined by the Admission Review and Dismissal Committee during the Review of Existing Evaluation Data process. To meet the criteria of a student with Autism, the student must exhibit a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and social interaction. Other characteristics may include but are not required to be exhibited, such as stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not apply if the student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance.

- When evaluating for autism, cultural and linguistic differences are considered through a parent interview, the use of a bilingual evaluator when appropriate, and an interpreter when needed. Cultural and linguistic differences are also addressed by carefully considering the tools used to assess the student's cognitive ability to ensure language and cultural bias have been mitigated to the greatest extent possible. When available, rating scales are provided in the parent's native language.
- When referral data supports the need for a functional behavior assessment, it will be completed as part of the Full and Individual Initial Evaluation. For a student already identified as having Autism, the ARD committee can request a functional behavior assessment as part of the review of the existing evaluation data process.
- To draft a behavior intervention plan, a functional behavior assessment is completed by a school psychologist, special education teacher, or diagnostician. The functional behavior assessment is presented to the Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee along with recommended target behaviors, function of the behavior, replacement behavior, and consequences. The ARD committee discusses the recommendations and adjusts and finalizes the Behavior Intervention Plan.
- The written report will include specific recommendations for communication, social interaction, and positive behavioral interventions and strategies.

Deaf-Blindness

- The evaluation of Deaf-Blindness includes an audiological examination performed by a licensed audiologist and a communication assessment completed by the multidisciplinary team. The evaluation data must describe the

implication(s) of the hearing loss for the student's hearing in various circumstances, with or without recommended hearing assistive technology. District evaluation personnel will follow the established procedures for procuring contract services for medical services and contract evaluators when necessary.

- The speech-language pathologist assesses the student's potential for communication through various means, including oral (spoken) and aural (hearing), fingerspelling, and/or sign language. The contracted certified teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will also perform a communication evaluation when appropriate.
- When needed, district evaluation personnel will follow the established procedures for procuring contract services for medical services and contract evaluators to ensure a report by a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist.
- When completing an evaluation to consider a visual impairment, the certified teacher of the visually impaired completes a functional vision evaluation. The functional vision evaluation is paired with an orientation and mobility evaluation completed by the Orientation and Mobility specialist.
- To obtain Consent to Release Confidential Information from the parent, the evaluation team member will describe to the parent why information is needed and what information is needed and request a signature to release information from the doctor. The doctor's name, requested information, and reason for request are documented on the consent to release information form.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- The evaluation for Deaf or Hard of Hearing includes an audiological exam performed by a licensed audiologist and a communications assessment. The evaluation data must describe the implication(s) of the hearing loss for the student's hearing in various circumstances, with or without recommended hearing assistive technology. District evaluation personnel will follow the established procedures for procuring contract services for medical services and contract evaluators when necessary.
- The Speech-Language Pathologist completes the assessment of the student's potential for communication through various means, including oral (spoken) and aural (hearing), fingerspelling, and/or sign language. The Certified Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing may also participate in this communication assessment.
- To obtain Consent to Release Confidential Information from the parent, the evaluation team member will describe to the parent why information is needed and what information is needed and request a signature to release information from the doctor. The doctor's name, requested information, and reason for request are documented on the consent to release information form.

When a licensed medical professional has provided documentation because a licensed otolaryngologist is not reasonably available, the evaluation team will work with the educational service center to locate a local otolaryngologist that might be available to the student. These attempts will be documented in the Full and Individual Evaluation.

Emotional Disability

- The School Psychologist has caregivers and teachers complete wide-band and narrow-band rating scales that focus on suspected areas of concern. Classroom Observations are also completed. Information is gathered from parents, teachers, and the student. Cognitive and Achievement testing are also included.
- A school psychologist and a diagnostician will be members of the evaluation team for a student suspected of having an emotional disability. They will also obtain information from classroom teachers, students, and parents.
- For an initial evaluation of emotional disturbance, referral data will be gathered from the Multi-Tiered System of Support Committee and/or the parent. The referral data will be reviewed to determine the suspected area(s) of concern. Testing will be planned based on this data. For a reevaluation, the ARD committee will determine the scope of the assessment through the Review of Existing Evaluation Data process.
- The school psychologist will observe the student in structured and unstructured settings and distribute rating scales to both adults in the home and teachers. The school psychologist will also meet with the student and may, when age-appropriate, have the student complete rating scales. The school psychologist also collects data from the parent regarding developmental history and socio-cultural factors. The educational diagnostician will complete cognitive and achievement testing and screen for language impairments. Both evaluators will observe the student to consider the possible need for assistive technology. The written report will contain specific recommendations for behavioral support and intervention. To meet the criteria of having an Emotional Disability, a child must exhibit one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects the child's educational performance. 1) An inability to learn that 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. 4) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. 5) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. Emotional Disability does not apply to a child who is socially maladjusted unless the child also meets the criteria for having an emotional disturbance. Emotional Disability includes Schizophrenia.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

DISABILITIES CATEGORIES

UT Tyler University Academy

212804

- When referral data supports the need for a functional behavior assessment, the functional behavior assessment will be completed as part of the Full and Individual Initial Evaluation. For a student already identified as a student with an Emotional Disability, the ARD committee can request a functional behavior assessment when needed as part of the review of existing evaluation data process.
- To draft a behavior intervention plan, a functional behavior assessment is completed by the school psychologist, special education teacher, or diagnostician. The functional behavior assessment is presented to the Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee along with recommended target behaviors, function of the behavior, replacement behavior, and consequences. The ARD committee discusses the recommendations and adjusts and finalizes the Behavior Intervention Plan.
- The written report will include specific recommendations for positive behavioral supports and interventions.
- Positive Behavior Intervention Supports include posting and directly teaching students classroom expectations. The teacher and/or licensed professional counselor teach social-emotional lessons in the general education classroom. When students have difficulty meeting school and classroom expectations for behavior, the concern is reviewed by the multi-tiered system of support committee, and interventions and goals are set to reduce target behaviors. If the committee determines the intervention is unsuccessful, a referral is made for a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation. Hospitalization due to social-emotional concerns triggers an immediate referral for a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation for students not already receiving special education services.
- When evaluating for an Emotional Disability, cultural and linguistic differences are considered through a parent interview, the use of a bilingual evaluator when appropriate, and an interpreter when needed. Cultural and linguistic differences are also addressed by carefully considering the tools used to assess the student's cognitive ability to ensure language and cultural bias have been mitigated to the greatest extent possible. When available, rating scales are provided in the parent's native language.

Intellectual Disability

- UT Tyler University Academy evaluates speech and language, developmental history, academic achievement, cognitive ability and adaptive behavior when considering whether a student meets the criteria of an intellectual disability. A child meets the criteria of having an intellectual disability when the student is reflected in an overall test score of cognitive ability that is at least two standard deviations below the mean when taking into consideration the standard error of measurement of the test, and it exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive

OPERATING PROCEDURES

DISABILITIES CATEGORIES

UT Tyler University Academy

212804

behavior in at least two of the following areas: communication, self-care, home living, social and interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, health, or safety. These deficits must manifest during the developmental period and adversely affect the child's educational performance.

- When determining which test to use for consideration of an Intellectual Disability, UT Tyler University Academy considers the language demands of the assessment tool, norming data on students with intellectual disabilities, and test bias. Cognitive assessments used for the identification of Intellectual Disability at UT Tyler University Academy may include but are not limited to the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, 5th Edition, the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, 2nd Edition NU, or the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales, 4th Edition. Rating Scales used to measure adaptive behavior skills may include the Adaptive Behavior Assessment Scale, 3rd Edition, or the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, 3rd Edition.
- Procedures for gathering adaptive behavior information include providing parents and teachers with rating scales to complete, parent and teacher information, and a classroom observation. Adaptive behavior that is measured includes communication, self-care, home/school living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, health, and safety.
- When evaluating for an Intellectual Disability, cultural and linguistic differences are considered through a parent interview, the use of a bilingual evaluator when appropriate, and an interpreter when needed. Cultural and linguistic differences are also addressed by carefully considering the tools used to assess the student's cognitive ability to ensure language and cultural bias have been mitigated to the greatest extent possible. When available, rating scales are provided in the parent's native language.

Multiple Disabilities

- When the multi-disciplinary team evaluates a student with multiple disabilities, the multi-disciplinary team considers if the child has a combination of disabilities and meets all the following conditions: the disabilities are expected to continue indefinitely, the disabilities severely impair the child's performance in 2 or more of the following areas: psychomotor skills, self-care skills, communication, social and emotional development, or cognition. Multiple disabilities do not include deaf-blindness.
- A connection between the special education data management system and the SIS documents the correct PEIMS coding. The Director of Special Education verifies PEIMS coding every six weeks.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

DISABILITIES CATEGORIES

UT Tyler University Academy

212804

Noncategorical Early Childhood

- UT Tyler University Academy is currently exempt from providing pre-kindergarten programs and does not evaluate students to consider this eligibility at this time.
- If students transfer to UT Tyler University Academy with the Noncategorical Early Childhood eligibility, the student will be served in accordance with students who transfer and reevaluated before the student's 6th birthday.
- The eligibility of Noncategorical will no longer be used beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Students who come to UTTUA already identified will maintain this eligibility until reevaluated by age 6.

Orthopedic Impairment

- When determining if a student meets the criteria of an orthopedic impairment, in addition to language, sociocultural factors, behavior, cognitive, achievement, and assistive technology, a medical diagnosis provided by a licensed physician is required. It may include impairment caused by congenital anomalies, diseases such as poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures.
- District evaluation personnel will follow the established procedures for procuring contract services for medical services and contract evaluators.
- To obtain Consent to Release Confidential Information from the parent, the evaluation team member will describe to the parent why information is needed and what information is needed and request a signature to release information from the doctor. The doctor's name, requested information, and reason for request are documented on the consent to release information form.

Other Health Impairment

- The educational diagnostician and/or School Psychologist will complete all parts of the evaluation and include classroom observations, behavioral rating scales, and/or executive function rating scales, as well as document information from a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner. To be a student with an Other Health Impairment, the student must have a chronic or acute health problem that causes limited strength, vitality, or alertness that adversely affects the student's educational performance. An Other Health Impairment includes, but is not limited to asthma, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette's Syndrome.
- District evaluation personnel will follow the established procedures for procuring contract services for medical services and contract evaluators.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

DISABILITIES CATEGORIES

UT Tyler University Academy

212804

- To obtain Consent to Release Confidential Information from the parent, the evaluation team member will describe to the parent why information is needed and what information is needed and request a signature to release information from the doctor. The doctor's name, requested information, and reason for request are documented on the consent to release information form.

Specific Learning Disability

- Evaluation staff analyze both informal and formal data across academics, intellectual functioning, communication, and emotional/behavioral/social behaviors to comprehensively evaluate whether a student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both that is atypical compared to age, grade-level standards, or intellectual development. The multi-disciplinary evaluation team determines if the pattern is relevant to identifying a specific learning disability and if the pattern appears to be attributable to a disability.
- Information is gathered from the student's parent, general education teacher, (or a teacher qualified to teach a student of his or her age), the district's Certified Academic Language Therapist when appropriate, and the campus diagnostician or school psychologist.
- When determining whether a student has a significant learning disability, the presence of a significant variance among specific areas of cognitive function or between specific areas of cognitive function and academic achievement is not required as part of the evaluation.
- UT Tyler University Academy uses a pattern of strengths and weaknesses to identify a specific learning disability.
- Evaluators at UT Tyler University Academy apply Dehn's Psychological Processing Model when analyzing data for a pattern of strengths and weaknesses. Dr. Milton Dehn has provided training to all diagnosticians and school psychologists at UT Tyler University Academy.
- Children not enrolled in school will be observed in the evaluation setting for characteristics of a specific learning disability.
- When a student is home-schooled, the parent is interviewed to determine the instructional curriculum provided to the student.
- When evaluating for a Specific Learning Disability, cultural and linguistic differences are considered through a parent interview, the use of a bilingual evaluator when appropriate, and an interpreter when needed. Cultural and linguistic differences are also addressed by carefully considering the tools used to assess the student's cognitive ability to ensure language and cultural bias have been mitigated to the greatest extent possible. When available, rating scales are provided in the parent's native language.

- When a student transfers from out of state, the ARD committee follows the Review of Existing Evaluation Data process to determine if additional testing is needed to continue eligibility for the student.
- A student with dyslexia and/or dysgraphia is a student with a specific learning disability.

Speech or Language Impairment

- Referral data is considered when determining the elements of a speech and language evaluation. For students referred with articulation concerns, a formal articulation assessment tool is used, informal measures when needed, in addition to observations and a core language test. For voice and fluency, informal observation and data gathering are reviewed. For language referrals, Informal measures for articulation, fluency, and voice are completed, and formal assessment is assessed in the areas of suspected concern (receptive, expressive, pragmatic). It may be paired with more in-depth measures when needed.
- English language proficiency is established to first consider the language needs of an emergent bilingual student. An interpreter will be involved when needed.
- When evaluating for a Speech or Language Impairment, cultural and linguistic differences are considered through a parent interview, information from the LPAC committee, and a language proficiency assessment when needed. Cultural and linguistic differences are also addressed by carefully considering the tools used to assess the student's language ability to ensure language and cultural bias have been mitigated to the greatest extent possible. When available, rating scales are provided in the parent's native language. The Texas Speech and Hearing Association provides guidelines for culturally and linguistically different students. Speech Pathologists at UT Tyler University Academy adhere to these guidelines.
- UT Tyler University Academy follows guidelines set forth by the Texas Speech and Hearing Association (TSHA) for each area of Speech or Language Impairment (articulation, fluency, voice, and language)

Traumatic Brain Injury

- When a traumatic brain injury is suspected, UT Tyler University Academy evaluates for impairments in cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech using various formal assessments and rating scales designed to measure the aforementioned processes and skills. Evaluation staff also gather informal data

OPERATING PROCEDURES

DISABILITIES CATEGORIES

UT Tyler University Academy

212804

from parents and teachers, a medical diagnosis from the student's doctor, and complete observations in structured and unstructured settings.

- District evaluation personnel will follow the established procedures for procuring contract services for medical services and contract evaluators.
- Direct standardized assessments will be administered in addition to information from parents, teachers, and observations to evaluate cognition, language, memory, reasoning, abstract thinking, perceptual speed, speech, and motor abilities. Rating scales will be administered, as well as parent, teacher, and student input, to evaluate attention, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, and sensory sensitivities. Information from the student's medical provider will also be considered.
- To obtain Consent to Release Confidential Information from the parent, the evaluation team member will describe to the parent why information is needed and what information is needed and request a signature to release information from the doctor. The doctor's name, requested information, and reason for request are documented on the consent to release information form.

Visual Impairment

- When completing an evaluation to consider a visual impairment, the certified teacher of the visually impaired completes a functional vision evaluation. The functional vision evaluation is paired with an orientation and mobility evaluation completed by the Orientation and Mobility specialist. A learning media assessment is also completed by the certified teacher of the visually impaired.
- A low vision evaluation is offered to students through the Region 7 Educational Service Center with a local ophthalmologist at no charge to the parents.
- Explain the roles of the certified teacher of students with visual impairments and the certified orientation and mobility specialist when following evaluation procedures.
- To obtain Consent to Release Confidential Information from the parent, the evaluation team member will describe to the parent why information is needed and what information is needed and request a signature to release information from the doctor.

Eligibility for Special Education Services

- To be eligible to receive special education services, a student must be a "child with a disability" as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations and Texas Education Code. These specific criteria will be used to determine whether a student's condition meets one or more of the definitions in federal regulations or state law.
- To determine whether a student is eligible for special education and related services, the Admission Review and Dismissal Committee

Developmental Delay

- When a student between the ages of 3 and 9 is evaluated for a special education disability listed above and the evaluation data indicates a need for special education and related services and show evidence of, but does not clearly confirm the presence of the suspected disability due to the child’s young age, the ARD committee may determine the identification of a developmental delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development. Multiple sources of data must converge to indicate the student exhibits performance on appropriate norm-referenced measures, including developmental measures that meet the criteria set forth in TEC 89.1040

STAFF RESPONSIBLE:

District Level: Special Education Director, School Psychologist, Speech Language Pathologist, Certified Academic Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Certified Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Orientation and Mobility Specialist, and Bilingual Diagnostician, Bilingual Speech Pathologist

Campus Level: Campus Diagnostician

TIMELINES FOR IDENTIFYING DISABILITY CONDITIONS:

- 45 school days to complete the evaluation, with an additional 30 calendar days to complete the ARD meeting.
- Reevaluation timelines are determined by the ARD committee but must be completed at least every three years, either through formal testing or the REED process.

EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE:

- Evaluation Spreadsheet
- Evaluation Team biweekly meetings
- List of qualified evaluators with appropriate licenses and certifications
- Copies of evaluations