Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation
WI FACETS

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
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Outcomes

Participants will:

- Review the legal requirements of completing a comprehensive special education evaluation regardless of the specific area of eligibility.

- Understand the role of the parent on the IEP team during the comprehensive evaluation process.

- Learn what educationally relevant questions are, why they are important as a part of a comprehensive evaluation, and how to ask them.

Activity

What is one word that comes to mind when you hear the term 'comprehensive special education evaluation'?

Type your answer in the chat.

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Foundational Concept

Educational equity means **every** student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income

Foundational Concept

A **comprehensive evaluation** exists within a district's equitable multilevel system of support (MLSS) and represents a **collaborative effort** between families, general educators, related services, and special educators to understand a student's needs

Equitable Multi-Level System of Supports

- Individual student concerns
- Strategic assessment
- Child find and referral
- Comprehensive special education evaluation
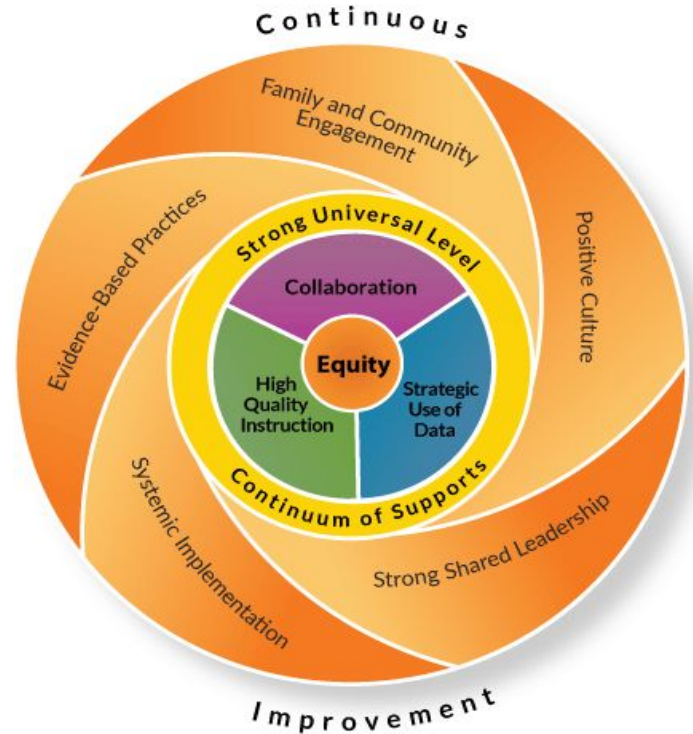
Foundational Concept

CCR IEP 5 Beliefs

- High Expectations
- Culturally Responsive Practices
- Student Relationships
- Family and Community Engagement
- Collective Responsibility

EQUALITY   EQUITY   No Barriers
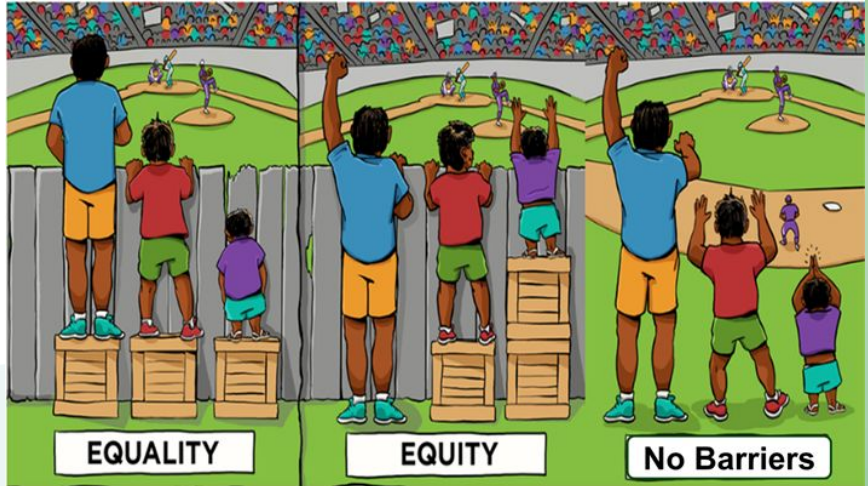
Foundational Concept: Needs vs. Labels

Comprehensive Evaluation (Need Focus)	Categorical Evaluation (Label Focus)
What questions do we have about this student?	"I think the child has an intellectual disability….do they meet the eligibility criteria for ID"?
Why is the student displaying these behaviors or struggling with x?	We need to conduct an "impairment" evaluation (eg. Speech and language evaluation, SLD evaluation, evaluation for EBD, SDD, etc.)
Why is the student struggling to meet grade level standards?	The student isn't meeting grade level standards….they must have a disability.
What are the student's strengths and unique individual needs?	What is the disability label?

Evaluation and Assessment

Evaluation: A set of procedures used to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education that the child needs

Assessment: A wide variety of tools, both formal and informal, that can be used to gather information about an individual student

Evaluation

Review

Interview

Observe

Test

Legal Requirements

Both State and Federal Special Education Regulations Address Comprehensive Evaluation

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Wisconsin State Statute CH 115 and Rules

Evaluations and COVID-19

What is Special Education Evaluation?

"Evaluation means **procedures used . . . to determine** whether a child has a disability and the **nature and extent** of the special education and related services that the child needs."

34 CFR 300.15

All Special Education Evaluations are Comprehensive

IDEA requirements for comprehensive special education evaluations apply to every evaluation

- o Initial Evaluation
- o Reevaluation

Special Education Evaluation Serves Two Purposes

The evaluation must provide sufficient information to determine:

- o *Whether the child is a child with a disability, **and***
- o *The content of the child's IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum/age appropriate activities*

34 CFR 300.304(b)(1)

Special Education Evaluation is not Impairment Specific

IDEA requires

. . the evaluation be sufficiently comprehensive to identify the child's special education and related service needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability (impairment) category in which the child has been classified.

34 CFR 300.304 (c)(6)

State Criteria are Necessary but May Not be Sufficient
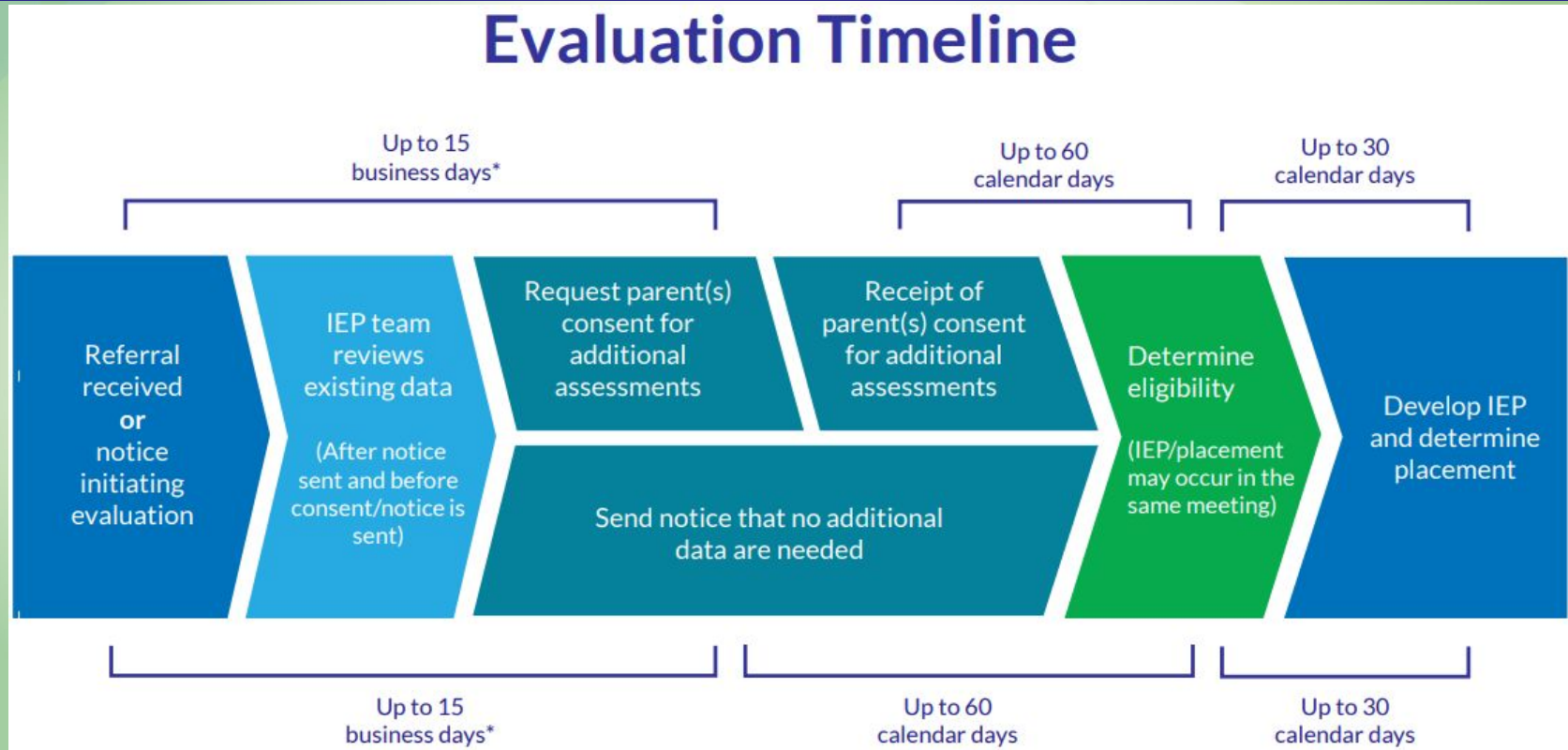
DOCUMENTATION OF ELIGIBILITY

☐ Yes ☐ No The student exhibits social, emotional, behavioral functioning that so departs from generally accepted age appropriate, ethnic or cultural norms that it adversely affects the child in at least one (1) of the following areas. *Check all that apply.*

☐ Academic progress ☐ Classroom adjustment
☐ Social relationships ☐ Self care
☐ Personal adjustment ☐ Vocational skills

☐ Yes ☐ No Behaviors are severe, chronic, and frequent.

☐ Yes ☐ No Behaviors occur at school and at least one (1) other setting. *Check all that apply.*

☐ Home ☐ Community

☐ Yes ☐ No The student displays any of the following. *Check all that apply.*

☐ Inability to develop or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships;

☐ Inappropriate affective or behavior response to a normal situation;

☐ Pervasive unhappiness, depression or anxiety;

☐ Physical symptoms, pains or fears associated with personal or school problems;

☐ Inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors;

☐ Extreme withdrawal from social interaction;

☐ Extreme aggressiveness for long periods of time;

☐ Other inappropriate behaviors that are so different from children of similar age, ability, educational experiences and opportunities that the child or other children in a regular or special education program are negatively affected.

November 2019

What Procedures are Part of an Evaluation for Special Education?

- Referral or Reevaluation and Notice to Parent

- Review Existing Data

- Request/ReceiveParent Consent for Additional Assessment

- Conduct Assessments

- Determine Eligibility

- Develop IEP and Determine Placement

Special Education Evaluation Timeline Procedural Requirements

Evaluation Timeline

| Referral received **or** notice initiating evaluation | IEP team reviews existing data (After notice sent and before consent/notice is sent) | Request parent(s) consent for additional assessments / Send notice that no additional data are needed | Receipt of parent(s) consent for additional assessments | Determine eligibility (IEP/placement may occur in the same meeting) | Develop IEP and determine placement |

Up to 15 business days* | Up to 60 calendar days | Up to 30 calendar days

DPI Evaluation Timeline : https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/sa-eval-timeline-visual.pdf

Additional Outcomes of a Comprehensive Evaluation

- **IEP Development**
  - Special factors
  - CCR IEPs (linking steps 1 to 5)
  - Special Education services
- **IDEA and FAPE Considerations**
  - Functional skills / affect of behavior on academic skills
  - Progress monitoring / growth

Comprehensive Evaluation: Rights and Roles of the Parents

Prior Written Notice Must Be Given Anytime the District:

- proposes to initiate or change identification, evaluation, educational placement or the provision of FAPE to your child

- refuses to initiate or change identification, evaluation, educational placement or provision of FAPE to your child.

WI DPI Special Education Rights for Parents and Children

Comprehensive Evaluation: Rights and Roles of the Parents

Consent means:

- You have been fully informed in your native language or other mode of communication of all information about the action for which you are giving consent.

- You understand and agree in writing to that action, and the consent describes that action and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom; <u>and</u>

WI DPI Special Education Rights for Parents and Children

Comprehensive Evaluation: Rights and Roles of the Parents

Consent and Initial Evaluation

- District must obtain parental consent before conducting an initial evaluation

- Consent for initial evaluation does not mean you have also given consent for the district to provide special education and related services

WI DPI Special Education Rights for Parents and Children

Comprehensive Evaluation: Parent Participation

- The parent is a crucial member of the IEP Team!

- The parent must be included as part of the IEP Team. A meeting or decisions regarding your child's special education eligibility must include your input

Comprehensive Evaluation: Rights and Roles of the Parents

- **Parent Rights:**
  - Notice
  - Consent
  - Participation
- **Parent Roles:**
  - Participation
  - Collaboration
  - Expertise & Investment

Types of Assessments

- Formative, Interim, Summative (not special education evaluation specific)

- Individualized as part of Special Education Evaluation

- Individualized as part of IEP

RIOT/ICEL Matrix

	Review	Interview	Observe	Test
Instruction				
Curriculum				
Environment				
Learner				

http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/pl_modules/intensive_interventions/days4&5/GeneralSession/ICEL%20RIOT%20Matrix.pdf

IEP Development

The Evaluation should provide information for the CCR IEP Five Step Process to …

- **Step 1**: Understand achievement through clear and concise data in areas of academic and functional performance in relation to grade level standards and expectations

- **Step 2**: Identify effects of disability and disability-related needs

IEP Development

The Evaluation should provide information for the CCR IEP Five Step Process to …

- **Step 3**: Develop IEP goals with measurable baseline and level of attainment

- **Step 4**: Align special education services that will support IEP goals and address disability-related needs

- **Step 5:** Analyze progress toward meeting IEP goals (ongoing progress monitoring, periodic review and report, and IEP team review)

IDEA and FAPE Considerations

Assessment results should include sufficient information so the IEP team can consider . . .

- the student's previous rate of academic growth,

- whether the student is on track to achieve or exceed grade-level standards and expectations,

- the effectiveness of instructional interventions

Framework Overview
Key Ideas

- A comprehensive special education evaluation is a process, not an event

- Evaluation planning is necessary

- The evaluation process begins with a focused discussion on individual student "strengths" and "needs" **during the review of existing data** [instead of primarily relying on impairment eligibility criteria to guide assessment]

Special Education Evaluation Timeline Requirements

DPI Evaluation Timeline : https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/sa-eval-timeline-visual.pdf
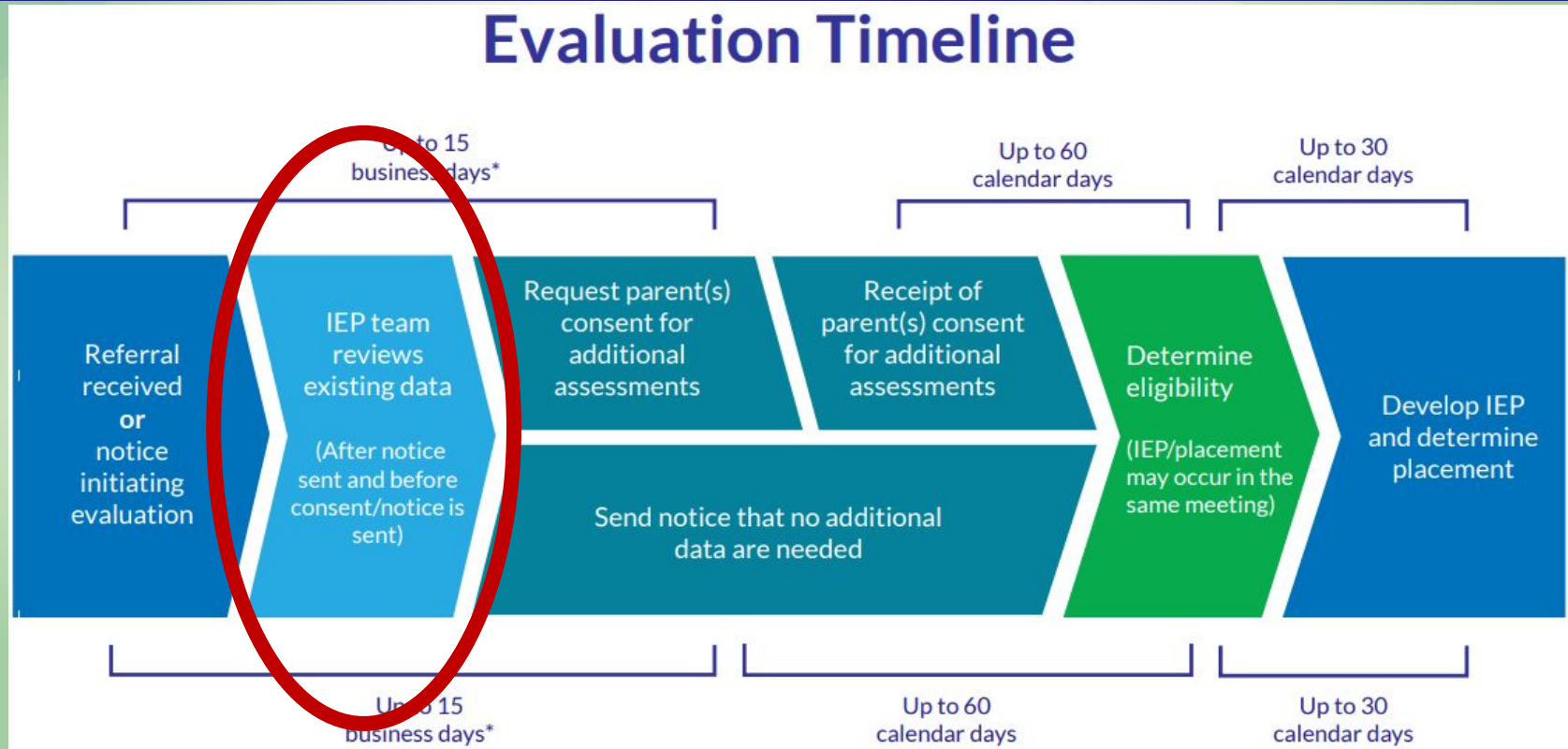
What is Your Role?

A Balanced View of the Whole Child

Comprehensive Evaluation Key Idea: It's important for teams to consider student concerns, but also gather information around strengths from families (and the student as appropriate) and others to paint a culturally responsive picture of the whole child

Framework Overview

A Comprehensive Special Education is driven by **Educationally Relevant Questions** grounded in assessment areas (domains) rather than impairment specific criteria

- o Need vs. label focused
- o Consideration of Impairment is only one part of a comprehensive evaluation

Educationally Relevant Questions and Areas of Strength / Needs

- Academic Achievement

- Cognitive

- Communication

- Independence/Self-determination

- Physical/Health

- Social and Emotional

Educationally Relevant Questions

- Seek to understand important information about the individual student

- Represent a variety of areas of strength and need (social and emotional, engagement, access, daily living and transitions, and academic)

- Explore areas of interest, strength, barriers, and need

- Constructed before conducting assessments, interviews, record reviews and observations

See [Margolis article](#)

Personalized Relevant Questions Example - Academic

- What content area is of most interest?

- What are the five most important academic skills the student needs to master this school year?

- What is the current rate of growth in these academic skill areas?

- What is the instructional level of the student in (academic skill)?

- What (if any) foundational skills is the student not demonstrating that may be affecting demonstration of a grade level academic standard?

Personalized Relevant Questions Example – Social and Emotional

- How do the student's peer and adult relationships affect the student's access, engagement, and progress in grade level curriculum, instruction, and environments?

- What strengths does the student have in social interactions?

- How well does the student use social and emotional skills in an academic group or activity?

- What observed environmental events disrupt the student's social and emotional state of being?

Personalized Relevant Questions Example – Access and Engagement

- What barriers are observed in the student's ability to access grade level curriculum or instruction?

- How does motivation or interest intersect with amount of time shown with engagement in academic content throughout the school day?

- What types of input does the student find reinforcing (e.g. social, tangible, sensory, movement, time with adults, time with peers, technology, etc.)

When Thinking about "Comprehensive"

It's not that you are going to look at everything; it's that you aren't going to miss anything…

To Summarize…

The evaluation must provide sufficient information to determine:

o Whether the child is a child with a disability, and

o The content of the child's IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum/age appropriate activities

34 CFR 300.304(b)(1)

Resources

[WI DPI Special Education in Plain Language](#) - a parent friendly handbook on special education laws, policies and practices in Wisconsin

[WI DPI Special Education Rights for Parents and Children](#) - DPI webpage containing procedural safeguards notice, communication options, and dispute resolution options