



Specific Learning Disabilities: Eligibility Determination under IDEA 2004

The passage of [IDEA 2004](#) brought about significant changes in the determination of eligibility for students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). Research has shown that the type of instruction, supports, and accommodations provided, as well as the demands of the learning environment are all factors in the identification of a SLD. Therefore, the primary change to the eligibility process for SLD is that more responsibility has been placed on the general education environment to ensure that the student has received adequate instruction in reading and math before the Team determines that the student has a learning disability. In addition, the option of using a response to scientific, research-based intervention process as an evaluation tool has been added.

In response to these changes, the Massachusetts Department of Education has created a process and a set of forms that will assist districts in organizing and documenting the elements that are required by both state and federal regulations.

The eligibility process has been broken down into four Components.

- Component 1: Historical Review and Educational Assessment
- Component 2: Area of Concern and Evaluation Method
- Component 3: Exclusionary Factors
- Component 4: Observation

This module will discuss each Component, what it means, and how and where documentation will occur.

This Module

This module, “Specific Learning Disabilities: Eligibility Determination under IDEA 2004” is designed to provide an overview of the requirements when a student is being assessed for special education with a SLD. The module contains:

- PowerPoint slides
- Facilitator’s Notes
- SLD forms
- SLD TA documents
- Handouts A-E

For training purposes, each Component and its corresponding documentation form is color-coded. Throughout the PowerPoint and Facilitator’s Notes you will see colors assigned to each Component. When preparing a presentation, if you are able to print your handouts on colored paper, this will assist in the training to ensure everyone is looking at the appropriate document at the right time. If colored paper is not available, you can note the footer of each document that has the color indicated. You can bring this to participants’ attention to ensure they are consistently looking at the correct document. See the section titled **Preparation** below for the color-coding system.

Training Length

Approximately three hours.

Intended Audience

General and Special Education Administrators (district and building level); General Education Teachers; Special Education Teachers; Related Service Providers; Parents

Stop and Think



Throughout the module, there are opportunities built in to “Stop and Think.” The icon notes these opportunities. Stop and Thinks are just that; they are opportunities for participants to stop and think about what they have just heard and assimilate it into what they already know about the practices that occur in their schools. Handout B corresponds with the Stop and Thinks. On Handout B participants have the opportunity to write down their thoughts related to each Stop and Think. As a facilitator, you may wish to give participants the opportunity to discuss their thoughts out loud on each Stop and Think. However, if your group does not feel comfortable sharing, we have built in an example in each Stop and Think that you can share with participants. As a facilitator, you can incorporate all the Stop and Thinks or only use them as needed.

Facilitator’s Notes

In the Facilitator’s Notes, you are all the information you need in order to make this presentation. You are encouraged to become familiar with this information, but you are not required to read it verbatim. Opportunities to customize the module are built into the Facilitator’s Notes. Within the notes of each slide there is an area where you can insert your own notes and provide examples from your own experience. Please feel free to customize the module to meet the needs of the audience. In addition, you will find text in *italics*. The italicized text is for the facilitator’s reference and it is not intended for this text to be shared out loud with participants.

Preparation

Before giving this presentation, there are several preparations that should be made.

- Familiarize yourself with all the content and material.
- Make copies of the PowerPoint slides for participants.
- Make copies of Handouts A – E for participants.
- Make copies of the SLD forms and technical assistance documents for participants. It is recommended but not required, for training purposes, that these be put on colored paper. The color code system is as follows:
 - SLD 1 = pink
 - SLD 2 = blue
 - SLD 3 = yellow
 - SLD 4 = purple
 - Mandated form 28M/10 = white

 - SLD TA 1 = white paper with colored ink
 - SLD TA 2 = white paper with colored ink
 - SLD TA 3 = pink
 - SLD TA 4 = pink