



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

# EDUCATION

## Referral and Initial Evaluation At A Glance

### REFERRAL

A referral begins the timeline for initial evaluation, which requires LEAs to complete an eligibility determination within **120 calendar days**. A referral may be written or oral.

**Things to Consider:**

A referral may be provided by a variety of sources, including:

- Parents;
- LEA or school staff;
- A student self-referral;
- A non-educational public agency; and
- For children under the age of 6, pediatrician or other doctors, hospitals, or health providers; child development facilities including daycare or child care centers and early childhood programs; District agencies and programs, including IDEA Part C programs; and community-based organizations.

### REFERRAL DOCUMENTATION

All referrals must be documented in writing, and an oral referral must be documented within **3 business days** of receipt.

In **SEDS's Eligibility Process** tab under the **Referral Acknowledgement** section, complete the following steps:

1. Document the source of the referral;
2. Document the date the referral was received;
3. Create the Final Referral Documentation Cover Sheet;
4. When prompted to upload files, upload an electronic copy of the referral form; and
5. Create the Referral Acknowledgment Form to provide to the parent.

### ANALYZE EXISTING DATA

The LEA must review existing data related to the student to determine if it has enough information to make a decision regarding the student's eligibility. Using the **Analyze Existing Data** section of the **Eligibility Process** in SEDS, the LEA must document areas of concern and complete guiding questions to assist in determining whether additional assessments are necessary, and must document its decision in the **Assessment Decision** section.

**Things to Consider:**

LEAs should use all currently available information, including but not limited to:

- Classroom assessments;
- Schoolwide and state assessments;
- Observations and teacher reports;
- Student records and grades;
- Early childhood setting data; and
- Parent reports and health records.

### PARENT NOTICE AND CONSENT

The LEA must provide the parent with Prior Written Notice (PWN) if it decides to proceed with an evaluation OR refuses to proceed. If the LEA decides to proceed with an evaluation, it must make and document reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for initial evaluation.

Reasonable efforts consist of at least **three attempts** to contact the parent using at least **two modalities on three different dates** at least **five days prior** to the end of the evaluation timeline.

- Modalities to contact the parent can include: telephone calls made or attempted; text messages; emails; mailed letters; visits to the parent's home or place of employment, and in-person conversations.
- LEAs must document reasonable efforts, and the results of such efforts, in SEDS. Letters should be uploaded, and all other contacts documented in the **Communications Log**.

### ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

The LEA must convene an eligibility meeting to review and discuss evaluation results and determine if the student is a child with a disability. The LEA, parents, and team of qualified professionals must make an eligibility determination in accordance with OSSE's eligibility criteria, and document the decision using the eligibility category worksheets in SEDS.

**Things to Consider:**

- LEAs must provide the parent with notice early enough to ensure that the parent will have an opportunity to attend the meeting. LEAs must use the **Eligibility Meeting Notice** section in SEDS to generate a letter advising the parent of the meeting date, time, and location.
- The LEA must complete and upload a worksheet for each disability category considered.

### ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION DOCUMENTATION

The team must document the eligibility determination by completing the six **Eligibility Determination** sections in SEDS, including:

- Creating the draft eligibility report;
- Documenting eligibility criteria by uploading the completed worksheet(s);
- Responding to prompts related to determinant factors;
- Creating and providing to the parent **Prior Written Notice** of the eligibility decision; and
- Creating a final eligibility determination report to provide to the parent prior to obtaining parental consent for services.