Identifying English Learner Students with Learning Disabilities

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Resources

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Essential Questions

1. What procedures and tools are available for identifying English learners with disabilities?

2. What accessibility support is available for the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC)?

3. What alternate English proficiency assessments are available?
What are the steps for identifying an English learner?

• Before the student enrolls in a California public school, a parent or guardian completes a Home Language Survey (HLS).

• If any of the responses in questions 1-3 in the HLS is a language other than English, student will be identified to complete an English proficiency assessment.

• Notify the parent/guardian as soon as possible, in writing, that the Initial ELPAC will be administered.

• If needed, a trained staff member will recommend accessibility support needed for the student to take the English proficiency assessment.

• Based on the results of the English proficiency assessment, a student will be identified as an English Only (EO), Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) or English learner (EL).
EL Initial Referral and Decision Making Process

Guides site teams in step-by-step decision making before a referral is made to special education.

English Learner Extrinsic Factors

A. Physical and Psychological Factors
   Health/wellness, self-esteem, and life experiences

B. Personal and Cultural Factors
   Mobility, cultural interactions, and family circumstances

C. Language Development Factors
   Proficiency, contexts of use, and instructional strategies

D. Previous and Current Environment Factors
   Educational history, opportunities to learn, and gaps in instruction
EL Initial Referral and Decision Making Process

• Review the **flowchart**

• Individually highlight steps that you think are helpful or spark new ideas

• Share your responses in your small group

[CEP-EL: A Comprehensive Evaluation Process for English Learners](https://example.com), San Diego Unified School District
English Learner
Initial Referral and Decision Making Process

English Learner is experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties as determined by performance data across settings, strengths and weaknesses, and comparison to peers (where possible, from similar backgrounds).

- Have the English Learner’s physical and psychological factors been ruled out as primary contributors to the difficulties?
  - NO
  - Provide intervention in areas such as vision, nutrition, hearing, sleep, trauma or injury, illness, living conditions, safety, belonging, and self-esteem. (See Section A, EL Extrinsic Factors form)
- YES

- Have the English Learner’s personal and cultural factors been ruled out as primary contributors to the difficulties?
  - NO
  - Provide intervention in areas such as socioeconomic status (e.g., utilize community resources), parental involvement & education, mobility, attendance, experience, cultural norms and dynamics, and acculturation process. (See Section B, EL Extrinsic Factors form)
- YES

- Has the English Learner’s language development been ruled out as a primary contributor to the difficulty?
  - NO
  - Provide intervention in areas such as proficiency in all languages (social and academic) and English Language Development (ELD) instruction. (See Section C, EL Extrinsic Factors form)
- YES

Has the English Learner’s previous and current learning environment been ruled out as a primary contributor to the difficulties?

YES

Is there evidence of a history of severe medical and/or developmental problems (e.g., orthopedic, hearing, or visual impairment, intellectual disability, traumatic brain injury) that adversely impacts educational progress?

YES

Hold a problem-solving team meeting to address student needs AND consider a referral for special education.

NO

Has a problem-solving team met more than once over a reasonable period of time in order to:

- identify and systematically address concerns?
- collect data for student progress?
- re-evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan?

NO

Provide intervention in areas such as:

- **Teacher/School:** collaboration, professional development, teaching/management style, expectations, qualifications, behavioral supports (school-wide, classroom, individual), cultural responsiveness, and family involvement.
- **Curriculum/Instruction:** based on Content & ELD standards, focused on ELD, explicit literacy and academic language development, strategic use of primary language, interactive and direct instruction, and the use of assessment data to improve student achievement.

(See Section D, EL Extrinsic Factors form)

Gather information from multiple contexts, tools, and perspectives (including parent/guardian), implement effective strategies, and monitor student progress over a sufficient period of time (e.g., 3 months).

(See English Learner Intervention Summary)
Is there a consistent pattern of limited progress?

**YES**

**NO**

Growth pattern may be improving, inconsistent, or not yet evident. Continue, modify or expand intervention, adjust time frame, and monitor progress.

**YES**

- Adjust/intensify intervention plan
- Consult with the Bilingual Support Network (BSN) AND/OR
- Consider a referral for special education

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**San Diego Unified School District**

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CEP-EL  Gaviria/Jones-Cristiani/Tipton
Possible Reasons for Initiating a Referral of an EL to Special Education

• The EL student is exhibiting the academic/behavioral difficulties in both first and second languages.

• The EL teacher and other general education staff indicate that the EL is performing differently from his/her “like peers”.

• The EL student displays very little or no academic progress resulting from appropriate instructional strategies, alternative instruction, or academic interventions.

• Parents confirm the academic/behavioral difficulties seen in the school setting (lack of response to intervention documented over time).

p. 117, Meeting the Needs of ELs with Disabilities Resource Book, Jarice Butterfield, 2017
Comparison of Language Differences Versus Disabilities

- Review one or two categories of cognitive and/or behavior indicators of possible learning disabilities.
- Highlight some key words or patterns that indicate possible learning disabilities.
- Share out your noticings

*Meeting the Needs of ELs with Disabilities Resource Book*, Jarice Butterfield, 2017
English Learner Assessment for Special Education Eligibility
Assessment of ELs

Why Assess in the Student’s Primary Language?

- It provides comparative data to the IEP team about how the student performs in the primary language versus English.

- The assessor can determine if similar error patterns are seen in both the primary language and English (listening, speaking, reading or writing) in order to discern if the student is having academic difficulties due to a language difference or a disability.

p. 37, Meeting the Needs of ELs with Disabilities Resource Book, Jarice Butterfield, 2017
Assessment ELs Cont’d.

Examples of When It May Not “Be Feasible” to Assess in the Student’s Primary Language:

The student has moderate to severe disabilities and lacks the communication or other skills to be assessed accurately in his/her primary language.

Note: If primary language assessments are not available, it is best practice for assessors to use non-language measures such as observations and structured interviews with teachers and family, as well as non verbal tests of ability to inform identification decisions.

p. 37, Meeting the Needs of ELs with Disabilities Resource Book, Jarice Butterfield, 2017
Use of Interpreters for Bilingual Assessment

Ways interpreters and translators are used in bilingual assessment:

1) Interpreters – Interpreters may be used to orally translate information given by the student or parent/guardian in their native language into English; interpreters may also be used to read test materials in the native language and interpret student responses into English

2) Translators – Translate written text in English into the native language

p. 37, Meeting the Needs of ELs with Disabilities Resource Book, Jarice Butterfield, 2017
Identification & Assessment Requirements for ELs

It is best practice to use the following four sources of information in order to address all socio-cultural factors related to ELs:

1) Norm-referenced assessments, to include non-verbal and other areas of cognition in English and native language if native language assessments are available
2) Criterion-referenced tests
3) Systematic observation in educational environments
4) Structured interviews (with student, parents/guardians, teachers, etc.)

Assessment of ELs’ Best Practices

Best Option – Engage in the following:
1) Administer cross cultural, non-discriminatory full or partial bilingual assessment in native language and English using bilingual assessors
2) Use structured interviews (parents and staff)
3) Engage in observation of student in varied environments
4) Collect data from curriculum-based assessment measures and compare to like peers

2nd Best Option – Engage in the following:
1) If there is no assessor available in the native language; assess in English, engage in steps # 2-4 above, and
2) Use an interpreter to administer the assessment in the native language under the supervision of school licensed assessors – document limitations in assessment report

p. 38, Meeting the Needs of ELs with Disabilities Resource Book, Jarice Butterfield, 2017
Assessment of ELs’ Best Practices, Cont’d.

3rd Option – Engage in the following:
1) If there is no assessor available in the native language; assess in English engage in steps # 2-4 on previous slide, and
2) If there are no assessment tools available in the native language, use an interpreter who speaks the native language to provide an oral translation of assessments normed and written in English – document limitations in assessment report.

Worse Case Scenario Option – Engage in the following:
1) If there is not an assessment tool or interpreter available in the native language, engage in #2-4 on previous slide, and
2) Assess in English, to include non-verbal areas of cognition.

p. 38, Meeting the Needs of ELs with Disabilities Resource Book, Jarice Butterfield, 2017

Appendix D6: EL Assessment for Special Education Eligibility Checklist
Potential Bilingual Assessment Tools

Meeting the Needs of ELs with Disabilities Resource Book,
Jarice Butterfield, 2017

Pages 9-14
• The ELPAC is the test that is used to measure how well students in TK through post secondary understand English when it is not their primary language.

• The Initial Assessment is used to identify students as either an English learner who needs support to learn English, or as proficient in English.

• The Summative Assessment is used to measure the skills of English learners. The results will help tell the school or district if the student is ready to be reclassified as proficient in English.

• The ELPAC tests four different areas:
  • Listening
  • Speaking
  • Reading
  • Writing

* American Sign Language (ASL), in and of itself, is not considered a “language other than English” for purposes of ELPAC testing.
Do students with disabilities take the ELPAC?

Yes, the ELPAC has been designed so that students, including those with special needs, can participate in the test and demonstrate what they know and can do. As a result, the test includes accessibility resources.
Part 1. Embedded Resources

Part 2. Non-Embedded Resources

Part 3. Instructional Supports and Resources on Alternate Assessment(s)

• If a student is unable to access the support listed in Part 2, an alternate assessment should be used.

Part 4. Unlisted Resources

• Change the construct being measured
• Use only approved by CDE
“Matrix Four: Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations” for the ELPAC

- **Universal tools** are available to *all* students on the basis of student preference and selection.

- **Designated supports** are available to *all* students when determined for use by an educator or team of educators (with parent/guardian and student input, as appropriate) or specified in the student’s individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

- **Accommodations** must be permitted on ELPAC tests to all eligible students if specified in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan.
What types of ELPAC accessibility supports are available for ELs?

Directions

• Think about an EL in your classroom and identify his/her disability.
• Review the list of universal tools, designated supports and accommodations.
• Highlight the type of support that will enable your student to participate in the ELPAC.
• Be prepared to share your list of supports and an explanation that support your choices.
English Language Proficiency Assessment Participation Consideration

Worksheet

English Language Proficiency Assessment Participation Consideration

Alternate assessments provide an alternate means to measure the English language proficiency of students with disabilities whose individualized education program (IEP) teams have determined that they are unable to participate in the ELPA2, even with variations, accommodations, and/or modifications. In order to aid an IEP team in its determination of whether a student should use alternate assessments, the following may be considered:

Circle "Agree" or "Disagree" for each item:

Agree  Disagree  The student requires extensive instruction in multiple settings to acquire, maintain, and generalize skills necessary for application in school, work, home, and community environment.

Agree  Disagree  The student demonstrates academic/cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum. The student may participate in many of the same activities as their non-disabled peers; however, their learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on the functional applications of the general curriculum.

Agree  Disagree  The student cannot address the performance level assessed in the ELPA2, even with accommodations or modifications.

Agree  Disagree  The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not based on the amount of time the student is receiving special education services.

Agree  Disagree  The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not based on excessive or extended absences.

Agree  Disagree  The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not based on language, cultural, or economic differences.

Agree  Disagree  The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not based on deafness/blindness, visual, auditory, and/or motor disabilities.

Agree  Disagree  The decision to participate in the alternate assessment is not primarily based on a specific categorical label.

Agree  Disagree  The decision for alternate assessment is an IEP team decision, rather than an administrative decision.

If the answer to any of the statements is "Disagree," the team should consider including the student in the ELPA2 with the use of any necessary accommodations. Specify whether the student will be assessed using the alternate in all domains or which domain(s) of the ELPA2 the alternate assessment(s) is replacing.

IEP Team Decision: ___________________________________________ is eligible for participating in the ELPA2.

☐ All Domains ☐ OR Indicate the domain(s) the student will participate in the ELPA2: ☐ Listening ☐ Speaking ☐ Reading ☐ Writing

IEP Team Decision: ___________________________________________ is not eligible for participating in the ELPA2.

Adapted from Ventura County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELA) 2017

Los Angeles Unified School District Policy Bulletin BUL-048496.0
## Potential Alternative Assessment Options to Statewide English Proficiency Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Name</th>
<th>Skills Assessed</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Alternative Language Proficiency Instrument (ALPI)</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking</td>
<td>Orange County Dept. of Education</td>
<td>714-966-4120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventura County Comprehensive Alternate Language Proficiency Survey (VCCALPS)</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing literacy</td>
<td>Ventura County SELPA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.venturacountyyselpa.com/">http://www.venturacountyyselpa.com/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Please complete the online meeting survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/lDels102518