

Essential Questions for Special Education Identification

These questions are designed to help a site intervention team consider if special education identification is appropriate, justified, and defensible for a student. Unless the intervention team can answer each question affirmatively, then the decision to recommend special education is not appropriate or defensible.

Tier 1:

- Did the student have access to rigorous, grade-level curriculum?
- What evidence do we have that our school's initial instruction (Tier I) was effective for similar students?
- Was the student given additional time and differentiated instruction during Tier I instruction?

Tier 2:

- Did we identify the student for supplemental time and support in a timely manner?
- What were the child's specific learning needs?
- What was the cause of the student's struggles?
- What research-based interventions were used to address the student's specific learning needs?
- What evidence do we have that these interventions were effective for similar students?

Tier 3:

- When was the child referred for intensive support?
- What quality problem-solving process was used to better identify the child's specific learning needs and the cause(s) of the student's struggles?
- What research-based interventions were used to address the student's specific learning needs?
- What evidence do we have that these interventions were effective for students with similar needs?
- Are there any other intervention or supports that can or should be tried before considering special education placement?
- Do we have agreement among the intervention team that special education is necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of this child? Is this decision defensible?