



Updated Guidance for IDEA Evaluation Services During COVID-19 Crisis Response

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATIONS

This document summarizes the position of the Alabama Association of School Psychologists (AASP) as it relates to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), assessments, and relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions. Resources include [guidance documents](#) provided by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE OCR); guidance from the [National Association of School Psychologists](#) (NASP); consultation with private practitioners and practitioners throughout the nation and our State; assessment publishers; and peer reviewed journals.

Regarding Indicator 11 and continuation of accepting referrals and in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines (by the Centers for Disease Control, Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama State Department of Education, etc.), practitioners are encouraged to follow through with testing with attention to chronological order of the date of the Notice and Consent for Initial Evaluation.

We would also encourage review of the following considerations:

Consideration 1 -

Postpone testing until schools reopen

Consideration 2 - For children that can follow outlined procedures for assessments completed in this format (please see our resources on aasponline.org)

- Designate specific locations for testing with ample room and air circulation
- Assign staff to collect student temperatures prior to beginning testing
- Ensure parents (and their students) can self assess COVID-19 symptoms prior to testing appointments
- Have students wash hands/sanitize prior to beginning testing
- When able, complete testing with safety precautions (e.g., plexiglass, masks, 6 foot distance)
- Sanitize materials and testing area between each student assessment

Consideration 3 -

Postpone testing that requires more hands-on contact until restrictions are lifted (e.g., ADOS, developmentals, etc.)

Consideration 4 - ***NOT RECOMMENDED at this time***

The validity and reliability of IQ and achievement through virtual, tele-assessment practices to date is limited (e.g., [Farmer, et. al, 2020](#)). Concerns include lack of facilitator training, substitution of subtests may invalidate overall results, unknown technology access in variety of homes, etc.

As with any non-standardized administration, practitioners are encouraged to include a statement regarding validity, reliability and interpretation as tests will not likely be given at this time in ways they were standardized. Practitioners are encouraged to review all other information in conjunction with standardized assessment prior to recommending eligibility.

Regarding behavior and/or adaptive ratings - Practitioners are encouraged to adhere to publishing standards (e.g., Conners 3rd Edition p 24, National Association of School Psychologists Principles for Professional Ethics Standard II.3.2, BASC3 p 11, Vineland-3 p 16). Ratings request teachers report on student behaviors over the last month. In most cases, teachers have not had consistent access to students for 10+ weeks and significant research exists to show the impact of time on memory which may significantly impact completion of forms. In addition, given the current situation (i.e., COVID-19, civil unrest), we must consider whether observed student behavior is in light of national/world crises or specifically related to behaviors previously in the learning environment.

Finally, practitioners are encouraged to consider that the current Alabama Administrative Code Special Education Services for eligibility requires components which cannot be validly completed at this time (e.g., observations, ratings, work samples, documentation of appropriate instruction, repeated assessments). This impacts a student's ability to receive services as they re-enter school. Therefore, practitioners are encouraged to collaborate with district and school administrators, teachers (general education and special education), etc. to develop plans for enrolling students whom we suspect may need more than general education support at the outset but cannot receive IEP services until eligibility is determined.

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