



Missouri Eligibility Criteria for Specific Learning Disability

Specific Learning Disability Definition

“Specific Learning Disability” means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of a visual, hearing, or motor disability; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or, limited English proficiency.

Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility

A child has a specific learning disability when:

- A. The child does not achieve adequately for the child’s age or to meet State approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child’s age or State approved grade-level standards:

Oral Expression	Listening Comprehension
Written Expression	Basic Reading Skill
Reading Fluency Skills	Reading Comprehension
Mathematics Calculation	Mathematics Problem Solving; and,

- B. The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified in A above when using a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention; or

The child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the group to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessment, consistent with 34 CFR 300.304-300.305. A pattern of strengths and weaknesses is defined as a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability of at least 1.5 standard deviations; and,

- C. The group determines that its findings under A and B of this section are not primarily the result of:
- 1) a visual, hearing, or motor disability;
 - 2) Intellectual disability;
 - 3) Emotional disturbance;
 - 4) Cultural factors;
 - 5) Environmental or economic disadvantage;
 - 6) Limited English Proficiency;
 - 7) Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction (as defined in section 1208 (3) of the ESEA) ;
 - 8) Lack of appropriate instruction in math; and,



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- D. To ensure that underachievement in a child suspected of having a specific learning disability is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, the group must consider, as part of the evaluation:
- 1) Data that demonstrate that prior to or as part of the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel, and
 - 2) Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the child's parents.

Professional Judgment

If a responsible public agency uses a severe discrepancy method: A child who does not display a discrepancy of at least 1.5 standard deviations as defined in B above, may nonetheless be deemed to have a specific learning disability if:

- 1) the child meets the other criteria of this rule; and
- 2) based upon professional judgment and review of formal and informal assessments, the evaluation team concludes that a severe discrepancy exists. In such cases, sufficient data must be presented in the evaluation report to document the existence of a specific learning disability.

It is the policy of the State of Missouri that any agency using a Response to Intervention model for the identification of Specific Learning Disability, must have written procedures for implementation that, at a minimum, incorporate guidelines developed by the SEA which are found on the Department website.

Missouri Eligibility Criteria can be found in the Missouri State Plan for Special Education, Regulation III- Identification and evaluation; <http://dese.mo.gov/governmental-affairs/dese-administrative-rules/incorporated-reference-materials/IDEAPartB-2014>