



Working Together in Schools

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

Collaboration between school psychologists and school-based speech-language pathologists (SLPs) is essential for conducting thorough and effective student assessments. This guide provides practical strategies to enhance team communication, build strong partnerships, and honor each professional's expertise. By working together, you can comprehensively address students' unique needs and help them thrive in the school setting.

Tips to working successfully as a collaborative assessment team:



RESPECT EACH PROFESSIONAL'S EXPERTISE AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE

- Recognize and value one another's contributions. Seek input from the school psychologist on cognitive, academic, and social-emotional functioning. Provide the school psychologist with your knowledge, skills, and expertise on language development and communication.
- Incorporate complementary expertise from the other person's professional scope of practice as it relates to individual roles in the school setting.
- Promote common understanding of shared goals.



DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES EARLY

Discuss and differentiate each professional's responsibilities within the assessment. This avoids overlapping and ensures that the assessment team covers all aspects of an educational assessment.



ESTABLISH CLEAR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Set up regular check-ins (before, during, and after assessment) with one another to discuss and share each team member's observations and data. Use shared digital platforms for updates.



SHARE STUDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION THOUGHTFULLY

Share important language, culture, and development details about the student, especially if they speak multiple languages or have faced difficult childhood events that could affect assessment results.



ADDRESS COMPLEX CASES HOLISTICALLY

Understand how social and emotional factors, trauma, or medical needs affect evaluations, including their potential impact on psychological and communication assessment results.



SELECT APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

- Select measures on a case-by-case basis to address specific referral questions while considering the child's language, community, and medical needs.
- Use multiple data points to address various characteristics (e.g., disability, language proficiency, acculturation), and utilize tools to assess (a) academic skills and (b) mental and behavioral health.
- Ensure that the assessment tool(s) you select are culturally and linguistically appropriate for that student.
- Share insights on discipline-specific assessments, language-based assessments, or assistive technology.
- If the child is multilingual, work with translators, English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teachers, and parents/caregivers.



DISCUSS BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATIONS

After testing is complete, exchange observations with one another regarding the child's behavior and communication. Both perspectives contribute to a more complete picture of the child's abilities.



COORDINATE ON PARENT/CAREGIVER AND TEACHER INPUT

Review and discuss input from parents/caregivers and teachers to ensure consistency in interpreting information from multiple sources.



ALIGN ON DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

- Share assessment team results with the larger multidisciplinary school team based on local-level guidance.
- Coordinate findings and discuss together. If contradictory information exists, discuss results and interpretations with the other professionals before presenting them to parents/caregivers.



PLAN JOINT FEEDBACK SESSIONS

Present assessment results together with individualized education program (IEP) team members. A united message provides clarity—which helps the IEP team make recommendations and advise on the next steps after the initial assessment and eligibility phases.

Each special education eligibility decision is made by a multidisciplinary team. This team includes school personnel and parents/caregivers. The relevant parties make their decision after reviewing existing data and eligibility criteria.

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