

**What is special education eligibility determination?** When a child is suspected of having a disability, a comprehensive evaluation must be provided. Eligibility determination occurs only after existing data, including data from a multi-tiered system of supports, Response to Intervention (RTI), the Student Support Team (SST) and evaluations, are reviewed. Eligibility determination must also document that one or more exclusionary factors is not the determinant factor for the determination that a child is a child with a disability.

**The Facts you should know:**

- All eligibility categories include the following exclusionary factors (a child may be found to be not eligible if one or more of these factors is present and a reason for the child's suspected disability):
  - Lack of appropriate instruction in reading
  - Lack of appropriate instruction in mathematics
  - Limited English proficiency
- Initial eligibility determination must include data from multiple sources including:
  - Achievement tests, aptitude/cognitive functioning, parent input, teacher recommendations, physical condition (medical, motor, vision, hearing), social/cultural background, adaptive behavior, communication/language and observations by teachers and related service providers.
- A child must be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability.
- It is possible to have multiple evaluation reports, including reports from various team members who conducted evaluations. Or, results from multiple evaluations may be compiled into one report.
- The school system will complete an eligibility report which documents the areas of your child's disability. The eligibility report will include statements about each component of your child's eligibility and may be comprehensive enough to also serve as the evaluation report.
- If the school system chooses to document the evaluation report using the eligibility report, then the report must be completed within 60 calendar days after receiving parental consent to complete the initial evaluation.
- Parents must be provided copies of evaluation report(s) and the eligibility report at no cost.
- Eligibility reports do not expire! This means that a child's eligibility for special education does not expire.
  - If a child is being considered to be potentially no longer eligible for special education services, the school system must first comprehensively evaluate the child. This does not apply to a child whose eligibility is ending due to graduation from high school with a regular education diploma or for a child who has exceeded the age of eligibility (22<sup>nd</sup> birthday) for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

**Where to Go for More Information:**

**Parent to Parent of Georgia** 770-451-5484 or 800-229-2038 [www.p2pga.org](http://www.p2pga.org)

**Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports**  
(404) 657-9968 or [spedhelpdesk@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:spedhelpdesk@doe.k12.ga.us)

**Georgia Department of Education Implementation Manual** [Special Education Eligibility Requirements](#)

**Georgia Special Education** [Rule 160-4-7-.05](#)

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** [34 C.F.R. 300.306](#)

Additional resources: Contact the **Special Education Director** for your school system.