

Consent for/Notice of Full and Individual Initial Evaluation or Reevaluation

Purpose

The *Consent for/Notice of Full and Individual Initial Evaluation* form serves several purposes.

- It provides parents with written notice of a proposed action to conduct a full and individual initial evaluation of their child, the actions considered by the public agency, and particularly the intent to collect new assessment information about their child for an initial evaluation or a reevaluation.
- It informs parents of which performance domains are being considered during the evaluation. When parents have knowledge of which domains are of concern and which are not, they are more able to participate in the decision making process.
- Finally, it provides the parent the opportunity to give their written informed consent for the proposed actions.

Consideration of Domains Assures that “Breadth of the Mandate” is Met

The primary discussion during the completion of the Consent for/Notice of form is the consideration of the performance domains (academic, behavior, physical, health, hearing/vision, adaptive behavior, and communication). These domains are not new in Iowa though they have often received little attention. These domains are extremely important because of their connection to the assurances granted by the U.S. Department of Education to the Iowa Department of Education with regard to non-categorical disability determination. This assurance is referred to as “the breath of the mandate”.

The breadth of the mandate refers to the State of Iowa’s responsibility under IDEA to identify all students in their child find process, who by nature of the determined disability, would be categorically designated under one of the thirteen federal categories outlined in IDEA. In the mid-1990’s Iowa proposed a system of child find activities and an identification processes that resulted in “non-categorical” designations for students with disabilities in the state. The Office of Special Education Programs allowed this process so long as the state could assure that all students identified under a categorical process would receive needed services in the non-categorical model. Through analysis of the underlying components of the thirteen categories, Iowa derived the seven performance domains. Iowa was said to be able to meet the breadth of the mandate so long as the evaluation process thoroughly considered the performance domains in the identification process. Thus, the requirement to thoroughly consider the performance domains for all students suspected of having an educational disability in Iowa remains.

Consent Expands to Consideration of All Domains

The *Consent for/Notice of Full and Individual Evaluation* form should logically follow the information generated on the Disability Suspected form. Because an evaluation can be initiated based on a single area of suspicion, the completion of the *Consent for/Notice of Full and Individual Evaluation* form expands the decision making process to include consideration of all performance domains for potential inclusion in the evaluation. The conversation at the time of completion of the *Consent for/Notice of Full and Individual Evaluation* form is critical as this discussion is the point when information is discussed and decisions are made about which educational performance domains should be evaluated and which domains do not represent areas of concern.

In completing the *Consent for/Notice of...* form, the team should fully consider educational disabilities that typically are assessed and the breadth of data needed to adequately assess the suspected disability. For example, a child for whom Autism is suspected does not need to have an Autism evaluation to meet medical diagnostic standards in order to be found eligible for and in need of special education. However, academic, communication, and behavior needs, at a minimum, ought to be discussed for evaluation. Similarly, a child with communication needs would have, at a minimum the communication domain evaluated, but could have academic concerns that need additional data as well. If you suspect mental health, rather than say, "We're not categorical so we don't assess mental health." we might say, "It looks like one of the concern areas is the impact of mental health on education; what do we need to evaluate to determine if this student has an educational disability and need for special education services?"

Consideration of Domains Does Not Require Assessment or Evaluation

As mentioned earlier, the primary discussion during the completion of the *Consent for/Notice of...* form is the consideration of the performance domains (academic, behavior, physical, health, hearing/vision, adaptive behavior, and communication). There are several other important considerations during the "consent" meeting:

- It would not be appropriate at the time of consent to collect new assessment information on which to base decisions about which performance domains will be evaluated. In fact, conducting assessments for this purpose, prior to obtaining parental consent, would likely constitute a violation of the consent requirement itself.
- There is no intent that the use of the *Consent for/Notice of...* form will create the need for a battery of assessments that are not individualized for the student under consideration.
- There is no intention that all domains be further evaluated for each child unless there is supporting evidence that evaluating any particular domain is necessary. At the same time, the domains should be fully considered to the extent that each may be relevant to the stated concerns.
- In cases where there is question or disagreement about whether an area should be considered for evaluation or not, applying the standards of suspicion (pervasively below standards, unique compared to peers, and no other more plausible reasons) may be applied to either rule in or rule out different domains. As with suspicion, this is a lower rigor decision. The full and individual evaluation will apply much higher standards and likely rule out areas that are over-included at the time of suspicion and consent during the process of making entitlement decisions.
- There is no presumption that domains refer directly to support staff title or role. For example, an evaluation in the academic domain does not have to be conducted only by an educational consultant; an evaluation in the communication domain does not have to be conducted only by a speech and language pathologist; an evaluation in the behavior domain does not have to be conducted only by a psychologist or social worker, etc.