

# Referral Quick Guide: COVID-19

## General Guidance

As LEAs continue with disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents, teachers, and problem-solving teams will have questions about how and when a referral to consider special education should be considered under these unique circumstances.

Question	Considerations
<p>If a referral was made prior to a district Category 3 closure, how do we proceed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the team has not gained <i>Consent for Assessment</i>, the team should proceed with the <i>Referral to Consider a Special Education Evaluation</i> process.</li> <li>• If the team gained <i>Consent for Assessment</i> prior to or during a closure, the 60-day timeline is in effect.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The 60-day timeline began when <i>Consent for Assessment</i> was received by the LEA. The evaluation must be completed within 60 calendar days of receiving written consent, excluding periods when regular school is not in session for 5 or more consecutive school days.</li> <li>○ The team should calculate how many days had already passed between the receipt of consent and the date of school closure and subtract that number from 60. The result is the number of days remaining for the team to complete assessments and make an eligibility determination.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px solid #00a0c6; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Example:</b>            If initial consent was received 15 days prior to school closure, then:  <i>(60 days – 15 days = 45 days).</i>            In this example, the team would have 45 calendar days to complete assessments and make an eligibility determination.</p> </div>
<p>What should the team consider when a student is referred for an evaluation during the school year?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All referrals must be reviewed by the evaluation team, which includes the parent. Using the <i>Referral to Consider a Special Education</i> process form, the team will determine if an evaluation is warranted at this time.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the student is referred for evaluation due to concerns about a lack of progress during the school year, teams should consider allowing time for schools to complete benchmarking assessments in order to make data-informed decisions. Teams should also consider the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What information does the team have about the progress of general education students?</li> <li>○ What information does the team have about the progress of the referred student?</li> <li>○ Does the team suspect that the lack of progress is the result of a disability?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the team determines an evaluation is warranted, the evaluation process will proceed as usual.</li> </ul>
<p>Can we refuse to consider a referral from a parent or teacher until we have gathered sufficient data to make a decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All referrals to consider special education must be considered on an individualized basis. LEAs should not create “blanket” policies that do not rely on an evaluation team to make individualized decisions.</li> <li>• Although the circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic are unique, each LEA is still required to meet its Child Find obligations. Based on the existing information, if there is reason to suspect that student may have a disability and may require special education services, then it would be inappropriate to delay a referral in order to gather additional information.</li> <li>• IEP teams must not delay a referral or evaluation due to the need for Rtl or general education interventions when there is reason to believe the student may have a disability. When appropriate, general education interventions can take place during the 60-day evaluation period.</li> </ul>