Assessments

Variety of assessment tools

The team must gather relevant functional, developmental and academic information about the student using a variety of assessment tools and strategies.

Assessments should be much more than the administration of standardized tests. One piece of data from a formal measure, while interesting, only provides a brief glance at the student's skills and abilities . . . it is critical to have several "looks" at the student and this includes what is typically referred to as informal assessments. Going beyond standardized tests allows one to obtain information on a student that will optimize the match between the student needs and services that are provided. See "Assessment Grid – Table 1"

There are many ways to gather information on a student. To accuracy of student needs, assessors should use a variety of assessment methods. This would involve a multi-modal, multi-informant and a multi-setting component.

Multi-modal component focuses on the methods used to gather information. It involves the use of both formal (standardized) and informal measures. There must be a balance between the two measures, without an over-reliance on one or the other.

Formal (standardized) measures provide a sample of a student's performance and behavior
Informal (authentic observations) measures document a student's performance over a period of time and across settings and should support the findings of the formal test results.

Multi-informant component focuses on gathering information from various sources. Sources may include but are not limited to:
- Teachers
- Parents
- Student
- School personnel (counselors, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, behavioral health specialists, etc.)
- Input from other non-DOE professionals (pediatricians, psychiatrists, etc.)

Multi-setting component focuses on gathering information on the student in different settings. These may include (as appropriate)
- Classroom
- Lanai or hallway
- Playground
- Cafeteria
- Isolated testing room
- Home

Documentation of Assessment Results

The written assessment report is a tool to communicate with parents and other team members. The intent of the report is to answer questions and clarify information about the referral and to assist with programming. Therefore, it MUST be written in terms that are understandable to parents and other IEP team members. It must include:

- Reason for referral which includes concerns (from teacher and/or parent)
- Behavior during the assessment period as it relates to the student concerns
- Interpretation of assessment findings
- Implications for learning
- Summary