

CPSE Considerations for Conducting Preschool Evaluations during COVID-19

A Toolkit for Committees on Preschool Special Education to
continue Child Find responsibilities during the COVID-19 outbreak

July 2020


Child Find Responsibilities During the COVID-19 Outbreak

As of the publication of this document, there is no waiver of federal timelines related to special education compliance, including timely preschool evaluations.

The Individual Evaluation guidance provides relevant information as to the preschool evaluation requirements:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/preschool/guide/indeval.htm#purpose>

All children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated



The initial evaluation must be completed within 60 days of receipt of consent to evaluate



Any delay in meeting timelines must be documented appropriately and communicated to parents in their preferred language or mode of communication

During the COVID-19 Outbreak, evaluations may not be able to be conducted in the same manner they are typically provided due to the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals performing the evaluation.

Additional Considerations Conducting Preschool Evaluations during COVID-19

- Determinations as to what information is readily available, what evaluation data is needed, which assessments may be conducted remotely, and which assessments require face-to-face contact must be made by the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) on an individual student basis.
- CPSEs must continue to complete required components of the evaluation to the extent practicable. Review of existing evaluation data and utilization of distance technology will best position the CPSE for timely completion of evaluations.
- Ongoing communication with parents and adequate documentations of decisions continues to remain essential.

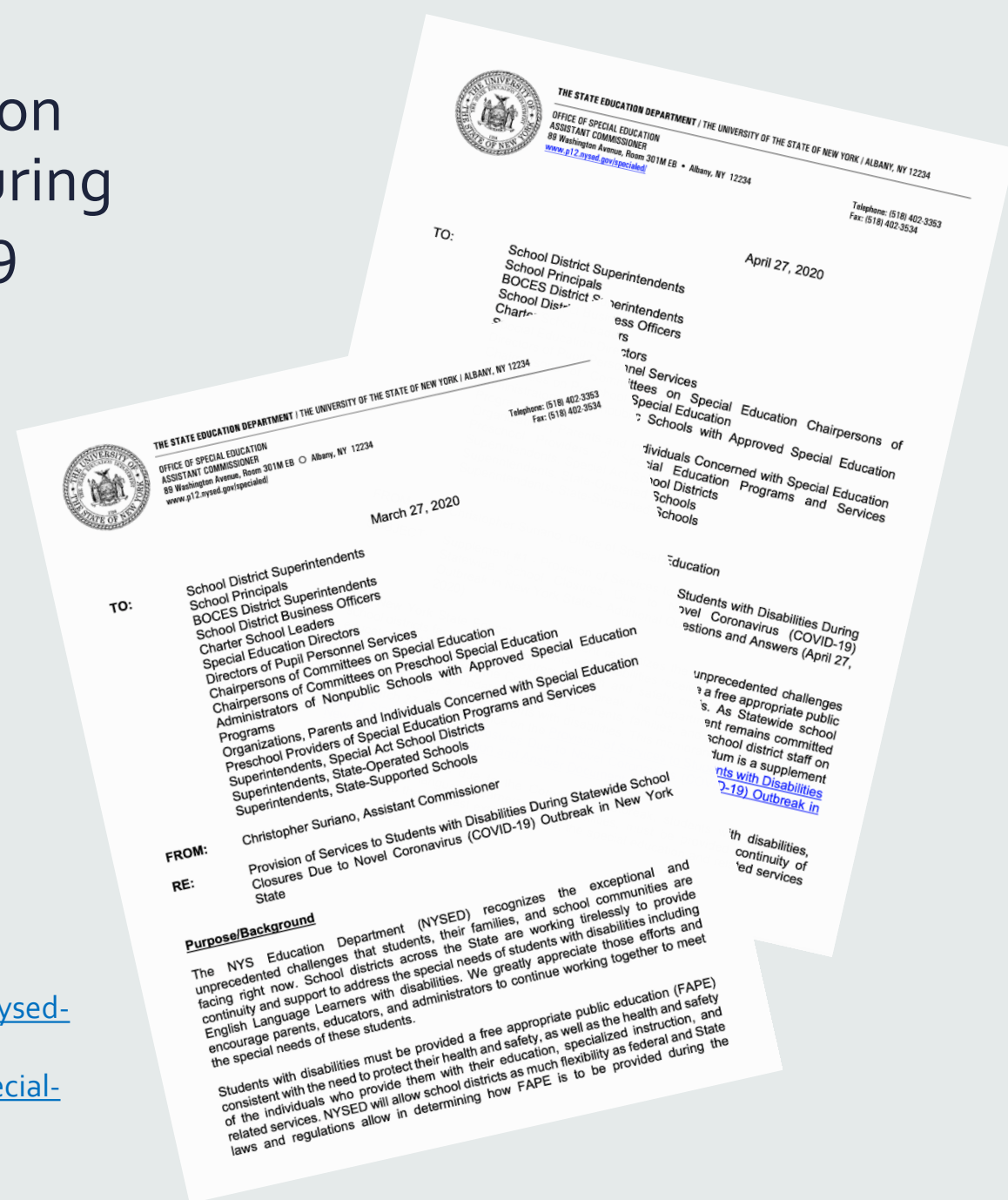
NYSED has issued Guidance on the Provision of Services to Students with Disabilities During Statewide School Closure Due to COVID-19

The following information is contained in the guidance:

- #7 If a school district is having difficulty meeting timelines for evaluations, can timelines be extended?
- #22 If a student was referred for an initial evaluation prior to school closure or is referred during school closure, must the school district move forward with the evaluation?
- #23 Can procedures, test or assessments conducted as part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation be conducted remotely?
- #24 Can a remote observation of the student while he/she is receiving continuity of learning at home be conducted?

March 27 Guidance: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/2020-memos/nysed-covid-19-provision-of-services-to-swd-during-statewide-school-closure-3-27-20.pdf>

April 27 Guidance: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/2020-memos/special-education-supplement-1-covid-qa-memo-4-27-2020.pdf>



EXECUTIVE ORDER 202.37

Notwithstanding any prior Executive Order to the contrary, special education services and instruction required under Federal, state or local laws, rules, or regulations, may be provided in person for the summer term in school districts. Any district providing such services in person must follow State and Federal guidance.

In-Person Evaluations May Resume

- NYSED interprets EO 202.37 to authorize in-person preschool and school-age initial evaluations and reevaluations for all children, not solely those children receiving Extended School Year programs and services

DOH Guidance is Applicable

- Evaluators should adhere to the health and safety principles, as practicable, outlined in the New York State (NYS) Department of Health (DOH) titled [Interim Advisory for In-Person Special Education Services and Instruction During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#) and any other guidance applicable to their professional practice

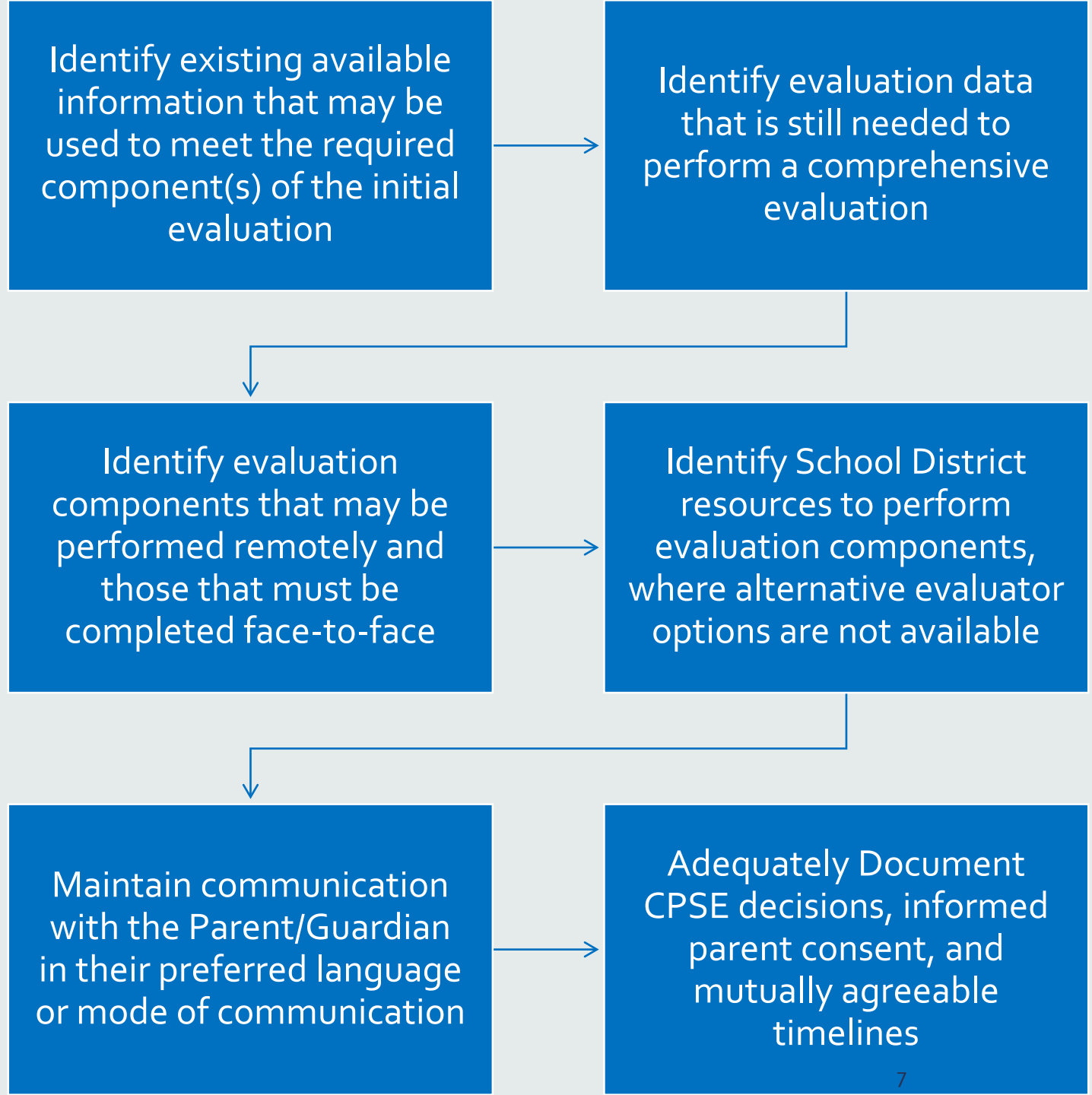
Remote Evaluations May Continue

- Evaluations may continue to be conducted entirely remotely or may be implemented through a combination of remote and in-person assessments provided that in-person evaluations may be delayed where the parent or provider has health and safety concerns for the child

The individual evaluation must be at no cost to the parent, and the initial preschool evaluation must include at least:

- ✓ a physical examination
- ✓ an individual psychological evaluation; except that for the 2020-2021 school year, to allow for appropriate flexibility due to the unique circumstances that have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, no individual psychological evaluation shall be required if schools are closed pursuant to an Executive Order of the Governor and students are learning remotely, unless it is determined to be necessary by a school psychologist
- ✓ a social history
- ✓ an observation of the student in an environment appropriate for a student of that age, to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty; except that, to allow for appropriate flexibility due to the unique circumstances that have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, during the 2020-21 school year if schools are closed pursuant to an Executive Order of the Governor and students are learning remotely an observation shall only be a required component of an initial evaluation where determined appropriate by the CPSE
- ✓ other appropriate assessments or evaluations, as necessary, to ascertain the physical, mental, behavioral and emotional factors which contribute to the suspected disabilities

What Options are in the CPSE Toolkit for ensuring preschool evaluations continue Evaluations during COVID-19?





Review of existing evaluation data must be initiated to determine what, if any, additional data is needed to make an eligibility determination.



Previous evaluations and assessments may be provided to the CPSE with parental consent



This information must be reviewed by a group that includes the CPSE and other qualified professionals, such as the approved evaluator, as appropriate



The CPSE may determine that existing evaluations fulfill requirements to determine eligibility or satisfy a component of the child's individual evaluation



This determination does not necessarily need to take place at a formal CPSE meeting

Identify existing available information that may be used to meet the required component(s) of the initial evaluation

Factors for the CPSE to Consider when Determining whether Existing Evaluation Data Fulfills Initial Evaluation Components

Existing assessment data may fulfill requirements to determine eligibility or satisfy a component of the child's individual evaluation with the following determinations:

1. The student has been assessed in the area(s) of the suspected disability or identified area(s) of need;

2. The existing evaluation data is current; and

3. Existing data reflects the current needs or functioning of the student.

- **If a previous assessment is current and relevant to the purpose of the evaluation, then it may not be necessary to repeat that assessment.**
- **Whether an existing assessment is current should be determined on an individual basis.**
- **Generally, a test or assessment would be considered current if it were conducted within one year of the request for an initial evaluation. However, for some students, a test or assessment conducted within one year could be determined not to be a current and relevant evaluation of the student's needs.**



Transitioning from Early Intervention Program (EIP) to the CPSE


Children transitioning from EIP to CPSE may have existing assessments and evaluations available for CPSE consideration. The current Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), progress notes, recently conducted EI evaluations, or diagnosis of a condition associated with developmental delay records would be part of the information reviewed by the CPSE as it determines what, if any, additional information is needed for a comprehensive preschool evaluation.

The Early Intervention Service Coordinator and Early Intervention Official, the CPSE chairperson and the approved evaluator work together to facilitate a smooth transition by reviewing the child's progress in the Early Intervention Program and determining the child's eligibility for preschool special education.

Parents are asked to give written consent to share copies of their child's most recent Early Intervention evaluation(s) report with the CPSE and the approved preschool evaluator. These reports should be reviewed by the CPSE and approved evaluator to determine if any of the information contained can fulfill individual preschool evaluation components.

Identify
evaluation
data that is still
needed to
perform a
comprehensive
evaluation

Special education eligibility determinations cannot be made without consideration of all required components of the initial preschool evaluation. Eligibility decisions, and any subsequent IEP development decisions, require consideration of all relevant data in order to ensure that sound decisions are made in the best interest of the student.



Based on a review of previous existing evaluations and assessments and input from the parents/family/caregivers about the child, the CPSE and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, must identify what additional information, if any, is needed to determine eligibility and special education programs and services.

CPSEs are required to collaborate with the evaluator to identify various areas of initial evaluations that could potentially be completed remotely, while considering the following:

Direct assessments are not the sole method for learning about children's skills and behaviors

Multiple sources of information must be used to determine eligibility

Availability of assessment tools that can be administered remotely

After considering available options for utilizing existing available information pertaining to the student, and exhausting methods for obtaining information remotely, the CPSE may determine that a comprehensive evaluation of a student with a disability requires a face-to-face assessment or observation. Those components of the evaluation would be authorized to be conducted in-person per Executive Order 202.37

Identify evaluation components that may be performed remotely and those that must be completed face-to-face



Applying Assessment Principles to Determining Eligibility Remotely

Kathy Hebbeler, SRI International

619 Coordinators Call

April 22, 2020

CPSE Resources for Remote Evaluation Considerations and Best Practices

<https://hml.fpg.unc.edu/Play/16497>

The presenter reviews the purposes of evaluation and assessment, and considerations for policies and procedures related to determining eligibility remotely



Norm-Referenced Assessment Tools for Children Birth to Age Five Years with Potential for Remote Administration for Eligibility Determination

https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/events/Assessment_Tool_Table.pdf

A list of tools was compiled to assist with identifying assessments that can be administered when the assessor cannot be in the room with the child.

CPSEs are also encouraged to contact publishers directly to obtain information as to which assessments for preschool children with disabilities are being adapted for virtual administration

Assessments Most Frequently Used in New York State with Preschool Children with Disabilities

Assessment Measure	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3
Name, Edition and Publication Date of Assessment Measure	Positive Social Relationships	Acquire and Use Skills and Knowledge	Takes Actions to Meet Needs
Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (Ages 0-5)			X
Arizona Articulation Proficiency Scale – Western Psychological Service		X	
Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI)	X	X	X
Bayley Scales of Infant Development (BSID)	X	X	
Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC)	X		X
Brigance Inventory of Early Development	X	X	X
Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs	X	X	X
Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) 1 ½-5	X		
Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Preschool (CELF), (Spanish version)		X	
Conners' Parent & Teacher Rating Scale (CRS)	X		
Developmental Assessment of Young Children (DAYC)	X	X	X
Differential Ability Scales (DAS)		X	
Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation, American Guidance Service, Inc.		X	
Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)	X	X	X
Learning Accomplishment Profile-D	X	X	
Mullen Scales of Early Learning		X	
Peabody Developmental Motor Scales			X

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/indicators/documents/assessments-preschool-children-with-disabilities-indicator-7.pdf>

Telepractice guidance has been issued by the NYSED Office of the Professions

The screenshot shows the NYSED Office of the Professions website. The main heading is "Telepractice Guidance". The page content includes a definition of telepractice, a list of professions authorized for telehealth, and a list of additional resources. The URL at the bottom is http://www.op.nysed.gov/COVID19_Telepracticeguidance.html.

NYSED.gov Select Language Google Translate Disclaimer **OP OFFICE OF THE PROFESSIONS**

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- Training & Continuing Education
- Professional Practice Corporate Entities
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SWMHP

- Alphabetical Listing of Entities
- Application for Waiver FAQs

4410EI

- Alphabetical Listing of Entities
- Application for Waiver FAQs

NYSED / OP / COVID-19 / Telepractice Guidance

Telepractice Guidance

Telepractice is defined as the provision of professional service over geographical distances by means of modern telecommunications technology. Telepractice is used by many professionals in a growing number of areas including, but not limited to, health care (telehealth). As a general rule, New York State Public Health Law Article 29-G authorizes reimbursement for health care services provided by telehealth means. Public Health Law §2999-cc defines, among other things, the following professions as telehealth providers: physicians, physician assistants, dentists, nurse practitioners, registered professional nurses when such nurse is receiving patient-specific health information or medical data at a distant site by means of remote patient monitoring, podiatrists, optometrists, psychologists, social workers, speech language pathologists, audiologists, midwives, physical therapists and occupational therapists. For more information on the requirements of telehealth, please review [New York State Public Health Law Article 29-G](#).

In response to the COVID-19 emergency disaster, Governor Cuomo has issued a number of [Executive Orders \(EOs\)](#), including Executive Order 202.1 which temporarily Suspended and modified Section 2999-cc of the Public Health Law and any regulatory provisions promulgated thereunder by the Department of Health, the Office of Mental Health, the Office of Addiction Services and Supports, and the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, to the extent necessary to allow additional telehealth provider categories and modalities, to permit other types of practitioners to deliver services within their scopes of practice and to authorize the use of certain technologies for the delivery of health care services to established patients, pursuant to such limitations as the commissioners of such agencies may determine appropriate.

Additional Telepractice Information and Resources:

- [General Telepractice Information for all Professions](#)

Profession-Specific Telepractice Guidance:

- [Applied Behavior Analysis](#)
- [Audiology](#)
- [Mental Health Practitioners](#)
- [Physical Therapy](#)
- [Psychology](#)
- [Social Work](#)
- [Speech-Language Pathology](#)

This collage features two documents. The top document is from the New York Association of School Psychologists (NYASP) and is titled "Guidance on psychological tele-assessment during the COVID-19 crisis". It includes a list of bullet points and a paragraph starting with "However, this guidance should not be interpreted to indicate...". The bottom document is from the American Psychological Association and is titled "Guidance on psychological tele-assessment during the COVID-19 crisis". It includes a paragraph starting with "Much of the health service psychology and broader mental healthcare world has rallied in recent weeks to adapt...".

NYASP

The New York Association of School Psychologists (NYASP) recently released a statement related to "Virtual Assessment of Children" during the pandemic. NYASP recognizes that we are all living and working under extraordinary conditions. The disruption to the lives of children and youth and the impact of this crisis are of significant concern to school psychologists. While conditions have changed and which school psychologists perform their work, it is clear that our services remain critical to help students access appropriate educational and mental health supports. Assessment continues to be an essential activity for school psychologists to engage in to help students learn and thrive within an educational context. Alternative strategies to assessment and the delivery of supports to students are imperative during this crisis. Further, NYASP recognizes that potential changes in assessment practices reflect an adaptation to current circumstances and may not represent ongoing practices when buildings reopen.

NYASP's recent statement regarding virtual assessment is clear in raising concerns regarding procedures that require face-to-face testing with students. To reiterate:

- Assessments must be administered in the manner in which they were developed. Adaptations are made for remote administration, there should be high-quality adaptations produce results that are similarly reliable and valid to the face-to-face. Any such adaptations should be documented in the evaluation report.
- Assessments should be administered remotely only on platforms designed for that purpose. Appropriate training is needed for both the school psychologist and the student. Even when appropriate supports are available, school psychologists should still identify and report any validity issues given the student's level during the testing sessions, etc.
- If the evaluation or reevaluation cannot be completed safely, school psychologist personnel should communicate with parents about this and reevaluate the date when the comprehensive evaluation can be completed.

However, this guidance should not be interpreted to indicate that such adaptations occur under our current circumstances. In fact, the NYASP

- Some reevaluation decisions can be made based on data. School psychologists should carefully consider when such adaptations are necessary given the continued need for special education services with students.

<https://www.nyasp.org>

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION SERVICES, INC.

Guidance on psychological tele-assessment during the COVID-19 crisis

By A. Jordan Wright, PhD, Joni L. Mihura, PhD, Hadas Pade, PsyD, and David M. McCord
Last updated: May 1, 2020 Date created: April 3, 2020

Much of the health service psychology and broader mental healthcare world has rallied in recent weeks to adapt clinical practice to the necessary physical distancing constraints of the COVID-19 crisis. The bulk of clinical services, largely based on verbal interaction between the client and service provider, has moved to a distributed and distance service delivery model, largely relying on online teleconferencing technology to continue face-to-face contact with consumers (clients, parents, schools, etc.).

However, the situation is more challenging with assessment services that have standardized administration procedures that require in-person contact. In considering these challenges, some psychologists may choose to pause their psychological assessment services during this time; however, there are others who do time-sensitive, high-need and/or high-stakes assessments that really need to continue. Most current and emerging telehealth guidelines largely focus on psychotherapy and, as such, tele-assessment guidance is necessary.

Professional Associations have published clinical judgement opinions to continue evaluations remotely

Adequately
Document CPSE
decisions, informed
parent consent,
and mutually
agreeable timelines

As per standard practice, CPSEs must carefully document all stages of the evaluation process with the following additional considerations for remote evaluations:

Documentation should reflect CPSE determinations as to what information is readily available, what evaluation data is needed, which assessments may be conducted remotely, and which assessments must be conducted with face-to-face contact

When other options for remote evaluations have been exhausted, and in-person evaluations are not possible due to parent/provider health and safety concerns for the child, the CPSE is encouraged to work with parents to reach mutually agreeable extensions to established timelines, as appropriate

School districts having difficulty meeting timelines for initial evaluations may wish to create a template document to assist school personnel in documenting decisions made, why timelines were exceeded, and documentation of parent participation and consent through temporary alternate methods, such as email or notes

Identify School District resources (staff/independent contractors) to perform evaluation components, where alternative evaluator options are not available



All School Districts are approved to perform the evaluations necessary to determine eligibility for preschool special education programs and services.



Where alternative evaluator options are not available, School Districts must identify how its own resources may be leveraged to obtain necessary information.



School district staff/independent contractors who are appropriately licensed or certified may perform necessary assessments on behalf of the district.



The evaluations conducted by the School District and by the private approved Multidisciplinary Programs may be used to complete a comprehensive evaluation.

The evaluation process should be thoroughly described to families/caregivers prior to conducting the evaluation. CPSEs may not delay providing parents with a Prior Written Notice (PWN) or obtaining written parental consent to evaluate until the school district resumes normal operations.

In addition to the other applicable requirements of PWN, the CPSE must consider the following for remote evaluations:

If the CPSE has information that is still current and valid to make an eligibility determination solely on existing records, PWN must indicate the records that were used for this purpose and inform the parent of their right to request additional assessments

If consent to evaluate was already obtained, the CPSE must document an agreement with the parent on those components of the evaluation that will be done remotely

If consent to evaluate has not already been obtained, PWN must also include those evaluation components that will be done remotely

If after exhausting all available options the CPSE determines it cannot complete all necessary components of an evaluation for an initial eligibility determination, then the CPSE should:

1. Communicate to the parents that completion of the evaluation must be delayed;

2. Develop a plan with the parents that reflects completing the individual evaluation; and

3. Document communication with parents regarding the plan for individual evaluation completion.

Maintain communication with the Parent/Guardian in their preferred language or mode of communication

CPSE chairpersons, evaluators and families have many opportunities to communicate and collaborate during the evaluation process and this remains critical when completing the preschool evaluation process remotely.

Parent Resources published by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center include:

Partnering with Your Child's Assessment Team Members

https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PGF_ASM2_partneringassessment_2018.pdf

https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PGF_ASM2_partneringassessment_2018_es.pdf



Sample Documentation Considerations for Remote Initial Evaluations during School Closures due to COVID-19

Student Name:		MDE:		Date of Parent Consent:	
Evaluation Component	What current evaluation information or current records can be used to determine eligibility?	What additional evaluation components/info is needed to determine eligibility?	What additional evaluation components/info will be obtained remotely to determine eligibility?	What information must be obtained via a face-to-face evaluation?	PWN, Parent Consent, Parent Agreement, and other Parent Communication
Physical Examination					
Social History					
Psychological					
Observation					
Other Appropriate Assessments:					
• Speech-Language					
• OT					
• PT					
• Other					
• Other					
Mutually Agreeable Extensions to Established Timelines:					

CPSE Remote Evaluation Considerations for the Committee (Sample Questions):

1. Was the referral received by the CPSE?

Yes No

2. If the child is transitioning from the Early Intervention Program (EIP), has the CPSE received the child's EIP records including the IFSP, assessments, and progress notes?

Yes No

The EIP Service Coordinator is responsible for obtaining parental consent for EIP records to be shared. The CPSE Chair should contact the EI Service Coordinator to facilitate the transfer of information.

3. Do the parents/family/ caregivers have concerns regarding the child's development?

Yes No

4. Have all existing records and assessments been reviewed by the CPSE and, as appropriate, the approved evaluator?

Yes No

5. Does the review of existing records and assessments fulfill the components for an individual evaluation?

Yes No

6. Can the CPSE determine eligibility based on review of existing records and assessments?

Yes No

If the CPSE has information that is still current and valid to make an eligibility determination solely on existing records, PWN must indicate the records that were used for this purpose and inform the parent of their right to request additional assessments.

7. Are additional assessments/info needed to determine eligibility?

Yes No

8. Has the CPSE considered all options for conducting evaluation components remotely?

Yes No

9. Has the CPSE communicated with parents to discuss any components that have been identified for completion remotely?

Yes No

10. Has the CPSE received consent to evaluate from the parent?

Yes No

If consent to evaluate was already obtained, the CPSE must document an agreement with the parent on those components of the evaluation that will be done remotely. If consent to evaluate has not already been obtained, PWN must also include those evaluation components that will be done remotely

11. Is a face to face evaluation required to determine eligibility?

Yes No

If a face to face evaluation is required, the CPSE is authorized to conduct in-person evaluations (either via an approved private MDE or its own school district employees/independent contractors). Due to parent/provider health and safety concerns for the child, the face to face assessment component could be delayed.

12. If a necessary evaluation component cannot be completed remotely or in-person, is there a mutual written agreement to extend the timeline between the parent and the CPSE?

Yes No

13. Has the CPSE maintained documentation of its determinations and communication, consent, and agreements with the parent?

Yes No