
Preface

S*pecial Education Eligibility: A Step-by-Step Guide for Educators* focuses on understanding the eligibility criteria and process for students with suspected disabilities. The term *special education eligibility* refers to a series of criteria that are used to determine whether a student meets the requirements under the federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004) as a “student with a disability.”

There are many reasons why a teacher would need to know about the eligibility requirements for students with special needs. The most important reasons include the following:

- To understand how the classifications of the students in your classroom were derived
- To understand how to make an appropriate **diagnosis** when you attend an **individualized education program (IEP)** or Committee on Special Education meeting
- To be able to render a professional opinion about whether a student’s classification is no longer an appropriate one or needs to be changed as a result of developing and new factors
- To be able to explain to parents or guardians how eligibility may be determined should the parent or guardian be considering an assessment for special education services
- To have a consistent format for making eligibility determinations when working with the **student study team** and making a referral for a student with a suspected disability
- To use as a reference guide when you are unclear about how various classifications are determined under the law

Special Education Eligibility: A Step-by-Step Guide for Educators takes you through a step-by-step process, so that you will have a basic overview of how all the various classifications under the federal law for special education are determined.