

NSSEO SLP CRITERIA

Introduction & Overview

Why?

We believe that every student can communicate. Communication is complex and multi-modal (verbal/non-verbal). Language skills are necessary within the school environment to engage in social interactions, to support functional performance, and to access the curriculum. Effective communication is the cornerstone of preparing students to become contributing members of society.

Focus

NSSEO provides Speech and Language guidance and assistance to school-based programs within the cooperative and is available to all eight member districts. A best-practice model, as defined by the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA), is used to support the integral roles Speech-Language Pathologists have in education. Speech-Language services help students meet the performance standards of the school district and state (Common Core State Standards, Illinois Learning Standards, and Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards) specifically receptive, expressive, and pragmatic language.

Purpose

The NSSEO SLP Criteria is aligned with Common Core State Standards, ASHA's Guidelines, and ISHA's Illinois School-based Speech-Language Services Severity, Eligibility, and Workload Analysis. This criteria provides guidelines for consistency across NSSEO and member school districts for determining appropriate severity labels (i.e. Moderate), eligibility, IEP goal development, direct service minutes, and consideration of Tier 2 services ([SLPs Role in Tiers of Rtl](#)). The NSSEO SLP Criteria was originally developed in 1985. It continues to be dynamic and subject to revision, as changes in education and the profession dictate.

Illinois' Administrative Law/Code stipulates that a maximum caseload for SLPs is "...no more than 60..." students. Given application of this criteria, severity units calculated suggest a maximum caseload of 100 total units (~1500 mpw or <2000 mpw).

Application

The application of this criteria may vary as *special circumstances* affect an individual student. Professional judgment may necessitate modification of these guidelines.

There are three essential parts represented on rating scales for specific age levels (i.e. Early Childhood vs Middle & High School) and populations (i.e. Complex Communication Needs represented on the Alternative Language and Prevocational-Vocational Communication Rating Scales). These parts of the criteria include: Team Input, Professional Judgment, and

Formal/Informal Assessment. Consequently, multiple sources of evidence are utilized within this decision making process.

Team Input forms are designed to collect evidence for adverse impact upon academic functional and/or social performance. Target skills have been identified in speech and language areas. These skills should also be considered for goal development. Scores are calculated and plotted on the corresponding Rating Scale (top row). EC-Grade 5 Team Input forms in the areas of language have a range of points (1-5), as well as on Alternative Language and Prevocational-Vocational Communication forms. Count total points and divide by the number of items on the form to obtain a final score. Middle & High School Team Input forms in the areas of language have a range of percentages. Add all percentages and divide by the number of items to obtain a final score. See Articulation, Phonology, Fluency, and Voice Team Input forms for further direction.

- Complete with *at least two* educational team members
- Consider *parent perspective* using team input forms as a guide within the interview process (may be considered one of the two educational team members).
- SLPs are **required** to follow up with identified concerns for confirmation.

Professional Judgment/Observation based upon, but not exclusive to, medical status, socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic backgrounds, and functional performance. A score is determined and plotted on the middle row on the related Rating Scale.

- Review of records (consider the student's history and learning curve)
- Functional Observation related to Team Input forms (consider a variety of contexts)
- Classroom Work Samples
- Dynamic Assessment
- Student Input

Formal and/or Informal Assessment may include Standard Scores or Percentiles, (Standard Scores are preferred for determination of initial eligibility). Select standardized measures with consideration for documented ecological validity and cultural sensitivity. This score is documented on the last row of the related Rating Scale. The final score should reflect evidence from at least two measures.

- Standardized Testing
- Developmental Scales and Checklists
- Language Samples
- Curriculum Based Measures (CBM)
- Dynamic Assessments
- Progress Monitoring Tools
- District/School/Program Assessments

Total Score is determined by adding the points from all three parts of the Rating Scale (Team Input, Professional Judgment, and Formal/Informal Assessment). This total score will be recorded below the grid. A final severity rating with a range of service minutes will be assigned. If the student's need shows 'Minimal Difference (s)', Tier 1, Tier 2, or direct services may be considered.

**When assigning severity ratings it should be noted that frequently students exhibit multiple types of speech and language impairments. However the student only receives one severity rating determination (highest severity rating) with related services.*

Special Considerations

- **Effort** provided by the educational team, family, and students required for student growth for the identification of the severity level, minutes of services, and service delivery model.
- **Expertise** required to implement strategies to meet student needs (i.e. Can the needs be met through collaboration, coaching, or do they require direct service from the SLP?).
- Components of this criteria may be applied to support the determination, plan, and progress monitoring for **Tier 2** services within a *MTSS* Framework.
- A student may demonstrate a speech and/or language impairment but if there is no **adverse effect** he/she is not eligible for special education.
- Identify **all aspects** of the student's program (e.g. classroom environment, curriculum, other related services, materials, interventions) for final determination of appropriate speech and/or language services minutes/units.
- Language (s) History questionnaires are available to collect additional information for **Dual Language Learners (DLL)**. All languages must be considered across the continuum of service delivery.

References

[Illinois Learning Standards](#)

[ISHA Eligibility and Workload](#)

[American Speech-Language Hearing Association](#)

[NSSEO Speech Therapy Webpage](#)

[Social Thinking](#)

[Picture Exchange Communication System \(PECS\)](#)