

Child Study Team FAQ's

I have been working closely with my child's teacher, but he continues to struggle in school. The teacher has suggested a Child Study Team Evaluation. What does that mean?

- When a teacher suggests a Child Study Team (CST) evaluation, it typically means that despite all the interventions and strategies attempted by the teacher in the classroom setting and by the parents at home, a significant change has not been made in a struggling child's academic or behavioral performance. At that point, more information is needed to determine what is preventing the child from succeeding in school. A CST evaluation will provide more information to the parent and the teachers so that the child's difficulties can be better understood and addressed more successfully.

Who does a CST evaluation?

- Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission (MOESC) provides CST services to St. Benedict School in accordance with New Jersey's Public Law Chapter 192-193 193.

Who is on a Child Study Team?

- A CST evaluation is a team approach. The team from MOESC includes a School Social Worker, School Psychologist, and a Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC), all certified by the State of New Jersey. The child's parents and teachers are also important members of the team. The SBS social worker helps coordinate the meetings at school, and our principal may also contribute to the process.

Who makes the request for a CST evaluation?

- The parent makes the official request, which is then generated through the school office or the school social worker. A 407-1 form requesting an evaluation is signed by the parent, and that form, along with forms documenting the student's current academic difficulties and interventions employed in the classroom setting, are submitted to MOESC. Any documentation from parents relevant to the child's issues in school, such as medical, neurological, and psychological evaluations from outside the school, may also be included in the initial request to MOESC.

What happens after I sign the consent and the forms are mailed to MOESC?

- After the forms reach the MOESC Department of Child Study Shares Services, the child is considered officially referred. According to law, the full CST from MOESC, the parents, and the regular education teacher must meet within 20 calendar days for a **pre-evaluation meeting**. At this meeting, it will be determined if a full CST evaluation is needed. Parents should bring any new information they may have that will help the team make this decision. If the team decides that an initial evaluation is indicated, additional data needed will be identified and which CST members and/or specialists will conduct the evaluation will be determined.
- It is important to note that not every child referred to the CST will have an initial evaluation. The team decides if there is a significant enough academic impact to warrant an initial evaluation.
- After parental consent to the initial evaluation is obtained, the evaluation, determination of eligibility for special education and related services, and, if eligible, the development and implementation of the services plan for the student must be completed within 90 calendar days.
- If a full evaluation is agreed upon, a date to meet following the completed evaluation is set, which is called the **eligibility meeting**.

What are the components of the evaluation?

- For most CST evaluation, a multi-disciplinary assessment in all areas of suspected disability is conducted. Most frequently, but not always, assessments are conducted by the CST social worker, psychologist, and LDTC.
- The CST social worker most often serves as the case manager and coordinates and oversees the meetings.
- The CST psychologist evaluates to determine your child's IQ, which assesses strengths and weaknesses in problem solving, interpreting auditory and visual information, memory, and processing speed.
- The CST LDTC administers educational tests to determine if your child academically achieves commensurate with his or her age. These tests also look for strength and weaknesses in reading, math, written expression, and oral expression.
- If a medical condition or developmental issue is relevant, evaluations by medical personnel will be an important component. The report from the physician must explain the educational impact of the issue.
- If a speech and language issue is suspected, an evaluation by a speech and language pathologist will be completed.

What happens after the testing is complete?

- Each member of the CST is required to send you a written report of his or her findings prior to the **eligibility meeting** for your review. The team then reconvenes at the eligibility meeting to review and discuss the findings. It is determined by the team at this meeting if your child is classified as eligible for special education and related service and, if so, what disability classification applies to your child. (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)1).

What categories of classification are there?

- There are fourteen categories for classification according to NJ law. The two most common categories at SBS are:

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) - A specific learning disability can be determined when a severe discrepancy is found between the student's current achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas: basic reading skills, reading comprehension, oral expression, listening comprehension, mathematical calculation, mathematical problem solving, written expression, and reading fluency.

Other Health Impaired (OHI) - This category includes medical conditions that affect strength, vitality, and alertness with respect to the educational environment. It includes medical conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or any other medical condition that adversely affects a student's educational performance. A medical assessment documenting the health problem is required.

A full listing and explanation of classification categories can be found online at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap14.pdf> , pages 71-78.

What if my child is eligible for classification, but I do not want him or her to be classified?

- Your child cannot be classified without your consent, even if he or she is eligible. It is your parental right to consent or not to consent. If you choose to classify your child and later change your mind, there is a process to withdraw the classification, as well.

If my child is classified, what happens next?

- A service plan (SP) will be developed at the meeting. This plan will determine specific goals and objectives to be reached, indicate what modifications and accommodations can be incorporated in the classroom and school setting, and indicate what MOESC services will be provided.

What MOESC services will my child receive if classified?

- If your child is classified, he or she is eligible by law to receive Supplemental Instruction (SI) by a teacher employed by MOESC once a week for 45 minutes. If warranted, additional services can be requested, but are not guaranteed. These include, but are not limited to, additional SI, an instructional aide, and/or in-class support provided by a special education teacher (all MOESC employees).

The complete provisions of the law that applies to special education services in nonpublic schools can be found online at

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap14.pdf>.

If you have further questions about the process, please contact me by phone or email.

Noreen Potterton, MSW
SBS Social Worker
potterton@stbenedictnj.org
732-264-5578 Ext. 40