



PANDEMIC APPROACH TO SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATIONS CHECKLIST



REVIEW

- School records prior to the pandemic:
 - Is this performance new? If so, look for a possible connection during the interviews and observations.
 - If there is evidence of pre pandemic struggle, document this and the results of prior interventions.



INDIVIDUALIZE

- Depending on the above results, focus more intently on the homeschooling environment:
 - Where did the student attend virtual classes?
 - What impact did that location have on their progress?
 - What support did they have at home?

INTERVIEW



- Assess the impact of their pandemic experience through individualized interview questions, such as:
 - Do they know someone who died from COVID?
 - Were they sick?
 - Has their behavior significantly changed? (A sudden change in behavior may indicate a significant emotional struggle.)
 - Has their attitude toward school changed?
 - Do they tend to be as happy, engaged, and friendly as before the pandemic?
 - Continue to investigate their emotional state for possible areas of need, which may impact academic and educational progress (i.e., position on the Maslow scale).
- Ask the teacher, "Where is this student in relation to other students in your current class?"

OBSERVE



- Prior school behavior may take weeks or months to return.
- Intervene quickly if you see atypical behaviors, signs of depression, aggression, etc.
- Take note of their peers, the overall classroom behavior.
- Observe them outside of the classroom for normal, friendly social interactions.



TEST

- Minimize the number of assessments by maximizing their results.
- All timelines are still in place.
- The APA suggests putting more weight on full scale scores than subscales.
- Look for processing deficits that correlate directly to the student's academic area of struggle.
- Collaborate. Share your findings with a fellow school psychologist, and review one of their cases to learn how their district is approaching assessments in a pandemic-altered educational environment.



REFERENCES

Understanding the Characteristics of Suicide in Young Children.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/research-highlights/2021/understanding-the-characteristics-of-suicide-in-young-children>

Trauma, Stress, and the Postpandemic Opening of School: Let's Not Pathologize Students' Emotional Needs.

<https://www.nasponline.org/professional-development/a-closer-look/trauma-stress-and-the-postpandemic-opening-of-school-lets-not-pathologize-students-emotional-needs>

The Pandemic's Impact on Special Education Evaluations and SLD Identification.

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center/return-to-school/the-pandemics-impact-on-special-education-evaluations-and-sld-identification>

Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19.

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

What to do about all the retention requests and requests for special education assessments?

<https://casponline.org/pdfs/publications/covid/Retention%20and%20Assessment%20Requests.pdf>