

Special Education Proposed Guidance for Universal Screener **REVISED 11.19**

Indiana Code (IC) 20-35.5 *et seq.*, as created by SEA 271 (2018) is intended to address general education students who may be “at risk” or “at some risk” for the characteristics of dyslexia or may be behind on grade level content. The definition of dyslexia states that deficits in the components of language are often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities of the student.

IC 20-35.5-2-8 requires that a school administer the universal screener to all students, except those already receiving intervention services for dyslexia and those students whose parents object to the administration of the universal screener. However, the screener may not be an appropriate tool for use with all students with disabilities.

This may be particularly true for students identified as eligible for special education and related services in the following eligibility categories: blind or low vision, deaf and hard of hearing, deaf/blind, multiple disabilities and/or students with intellectual disabilities. For those students, the following guidance is offered: the case conference committee (CCC) should consider how the student’s disability may affect performance on the universal screener and determine where the universal screener is developmentally appropriate for the student. In making the determination, the CCC should review existing data on the student, the student’s individualized education program (IEP), and any other relevant information concerning the student.

The school may convene, or a parent may request the school convene, a CCC meeting to discuss the universal screener. These decisions are made by the case conference committee and are under local control.

For students determined eligible for special education and related services under all other eligibility categories the school should administer the universal screener. If the student’s scores are below benchmark, with parental consent, the level I screener should be administered. This data should be viewed in context, and help drive instruction, IEP goals, and benchmarks.

The universal screener, and additional screening tools, are not a substitute for an educational evaluation for students suspected of having a specific learning disability, nor can they be used to delay or be required to be implemented before a student can be evaluated for a specific learning disability.