Pre-Referral Flowchart:
Team considerations for use prior to referral of a Multilingual Learner for Initial Special Education Assessment

Multilingual learners may experience academic and/or behavioral challenges, in which school-based teams are tasked with reviewing performance data across settings. Multi-disciplinary teams are key to the pre-referral process. Multi-disciplinary team members use an iterative process of reviewing data, identifying needed interventions & supports, and make data-based decisions prior to suspecting a disability & referring a multilingual learner for special education eligibility assessment.

1 Consider Extrinsic Factors

(✓) Complete an in-depth cum file review

Completing an in-depth cum file review will ensure teams are fully informed of a student's demographic information, educational, attendance, assessment, behavioral & health history. [Appendix 3.2 Cumulative File Check]

( ) Identify if there are any pre-existing socio-emotional, mental health or psychological factors

Multilingual students are a diverse population of students. Some may be recent immigrants to the U.S. or have moved to a new city/county or school. Thus, some may have experienced trauma, difficulties with change, assimilation, etc. resulting in anxiety, anger, depression or other social-emotional needs. [Appendix 3.3 English Learner Extrinsic Factors Sec. A]

( ) Identify if there are any pre-existing physical &/or health conditions

Health & physical ailments and access or lack thereof, to essential healthcare and nutrition, can be primary contributors to a student's academic and/or behavioral challenges. [Appendix 3.3 English Learner Extrinsic Factors Sec. A]

> **If the team determines that physical/health and/or mental health factors are primary contributors to the student's academic and/or behavioral challenges, rather than refer for special education assessment*:**
>
> Teams are encouraged to consider all basic needs & refer student to targeted school-based resources. Refer parent/guardian to school & community resources to meet the safety, shelter, mental health, healthcare, and/or nutritional needs of the student and family.

2 Consider Personal & Cultural Factors

(✓) Identify if there are any personal factors

Are there other extrinsic factors such as socioeconomic status, living situation, parent/guardian involvement, education mobility, or a history of poor school attendance affecting the student academically and/or behaviorally? For reflective questions associated with personal factors, please see: Appendix 3.3 English Learner Extrinsic Factors Sec. B.

( ) Consider cultural factors

Multilingual learners may experience cultural factors that impact learning due to their unique cultural norms. Language and culture may appear as a barrier, whereby families may need further support with understanding school expectations & how to acquire community resources. For reflective questions associated with personal factors, please see: Appendix 3.3 English Learner Extrinsic Factors Sec. B.

( ) Further exploration of Extrinsic Factors

Multilingual learners may be affected by extrinsic factors which impact their educational progress. Multilingual learners are not a homogenous group, but rather have varied cultural, familial, linguistic and academic backgrounds. School teams are encouraged to continue to examine the needs of individual students as they explore extrinsic factors. Consider conducting a parent/guardian interview; translation may be necessary. To better understand linguistic factors, complete Appendix 4.2 English Learner -Parent Questionnaire.

> **If the team determines that personal &/or cultural factors are primary contributors to the student's academic and/or behavioral challenges, rather than refer for special education assessment*:**
>
> Consider social-emotional supports, school-based counseling, and related interventions for the student. Provide parent/guardian with information related to community resources to assist them with personal needs. Orient parent/guardian to school resources, school expectations & norms; provide translation as necessary.

3 Consider Language Development

(✓) Identify English language proficiency skills

The individual English language proficiency skills of the student should be identified. What does language look-like in relation to listening, speaking, reading & writing skills in English?
- Review ELPAC data
- Review Curriculum-based assessment(s) data
- Conduct a student interview, please see Appendix 4.3 English learner Student questionnaire language use

( ) Examine supports provided to the teacher

Teachers are often in need of supports and systems that assist them with developing the necessary skills to serve the varied needs of multilingual learners. Identify:
- Has the student's teacher received training in the implementation of the ELD standards?
- Has the student's teacher received training & support with implementation of the adopted ELD curriculum>? Appendix 3.3 English Learner Extrinsic Factors Sec. C.

( ) Examine Comprehensive English Language Development (ELD)

Comprehensive ELD is part of every multilingual learners core instruction+. Examine student data & progress towards ELD standards. Data needed:
- What does designated ELD look-like for the student? What does integrated ELD look-like for the student? Refer to Appendix 3.3 English Learner Extrinsic Factors Sec. C.
- Consider conducting a teacher interview, please refer to Appendix 4.4 English Learner Teacher Questionnaire , Appendix 4.6 EL Classroom Observation Checklist

> **If the team determines that factors related to language development are primary contributors to the student's academic and/or behavioral challenges, rather than refer for special education assessment*:**
>
> The team should further review data gathered regarding the student's English language proficiency skills. Determine targeted interventions. Where necessary, provide the teacher with additional ELD standards & ELD curriculum training , and support to engage in culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

4 Consider Learning Environments

(✓) Consider Accessibility Resources

Based on the current interventions in place to address extrinsic factors, cultural, personal, and language development needs, multidisciplinary teams should: re-examine data over time, document interventions, to include implementation of refined/targeted primary language resources, and accessibility resources during instruction & assessment. Please refer to: CA Assessment Accessibility Resources Matrix & the ELPAC Student Accessibility Checklist.

( ) Examine classroom opportunities to build English language proficiency skills

Multilingual learners require opportunities to interact in meaningful ways. At this step of inquiry, teams refine targeted interventions by conducting additional observations of the student. Observers identify & reflect upon, how the multilingual learner:
- engages in collaborative conversations in English (i.e. Listening & Speaking)
- demonstrates learning orally & in writing in English (i.e. Speaking & Writing)
- comprehends & analyzes written and spoken texts in English? (i.e. Reading & Listening) Supportive tools: Appendix 4.6 EL Classroom Observation Checklist and Appendix 4.7 Focused Observation of English Learner during English Instruction

Multi-tiered System of Support

California's MTSS framework provides a systematic approach for ensuring that multilingual learners receive the supports and services they require to meet their language and learning needs. During the MTSS process, teams use an iterative process of reviewing data and implementing interventions accordingly. For more information, refer to: CA Multi-tiered Systems of Support

Tier I

Tier I is basic core instruction. Visit CAST for more on: Universal Design for Learning Guidelines.

Tier II

Tier II interventions for multilingual learners with academic & behavioral challenges occur along with integrated & designated ELD (Tier I Core). To document interventions refer to: Appendix 3.4 English Learner Intervention Summary

Tier III

Intensive individualized interventions are refined in Tier III. Tier III is not special education. Reexamine student data to address targeted needs. Teams may further review & consider: Language Difference vs. Disability. Based on data, teams may consider referral for special education assessment at this time.
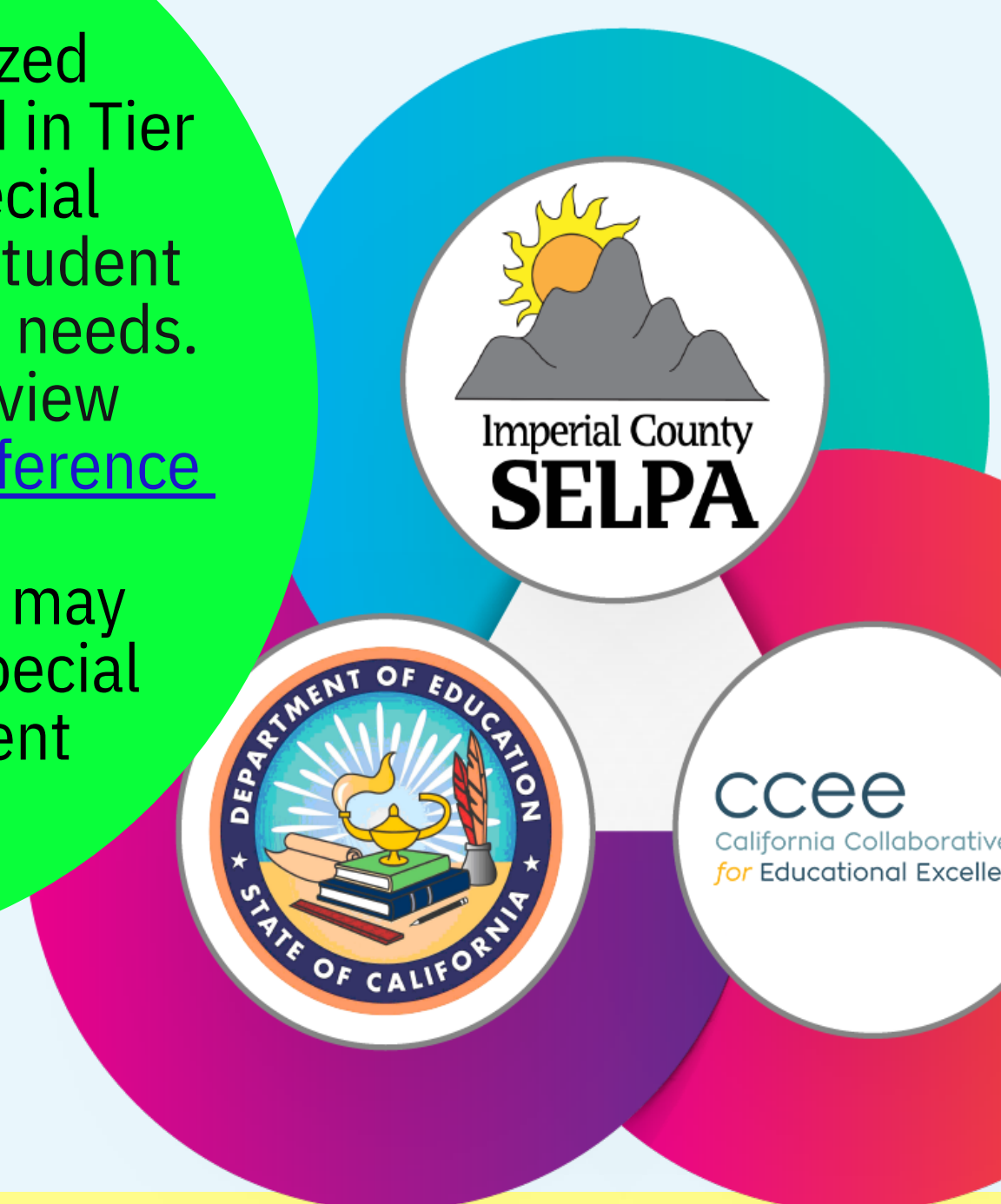
✱ Remember...

✱ Special Education Assessment

A student may be referred for initial assessment to determine special education eligibility at any time there is a suspicion of a disability. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that all students referred for assessment to determine eligibility for special education receive an assessment that meets the requirements found in the IDEA (Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] sections 300.304–305) and in state statute (California Education Code [EC] sections 56320–56330), which include the use of culturally & linguistically appropriate assessment practices. Please Note: The normal process of English language development, as well as manifestations of dialect and sociolinguistic variance shall not be diagnosed as a disabling condition (5 CCR 3023[b]).

✚ Comprehensive ELD

Comprehensive ELD is a Tier 1, basic core service, for all multilingual learners. Comprehensive ELD includes both designated and integrated ELD. For more information regarding ELD:
- Designated & Integrated ELD in CA
- ELD Standards Resources
- ELD Curriculum Frameworks
- CDE's Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students: Research to Practice book

For more information visit the Imperial County SELPA, Improving Outcomes for English Learners with Disabilities website:
https://www.icoe.org/selpa/el-swd

California Practitioners' Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities