



MCIU Bilingual Evaluation Team

Is it second language acquisition or disorder?

BILINGUALISM and MCIU

The MCIU offers bilingual Spanish-English psychological and speech/language evaluations for school-age students who may be eligible for special education services within Montgomery County. It is MCIU's goal to provide appropriate educational services to culturally and linguistically diverse children across the county.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

There is a growing population of Spanish-speaking students in Montgomery County who are entitled to appropriate educational services to meet their needs. Given the complexities involved in bilingualism and significant variability among bilingual individuals, students with educational concerns should be evaluated by personnel who are prepared to address the unique background of each student. It is well documented that culturally and linguistically diverse students are frequently under- or over-diagnosed with learning differences or disabilities, leading to overrepresentation of bilingual students in special education or bilingual students with unidentified educational needs.

WHEN SHOULD YOU EVALUATE A BILINGUAL STUDENT?

If a bilingual student, after implementing appropriate evidence-based interventions, does not show progress and continues to struggle in their classroom environment, a psychological and/or speech and language evaluation can identify or rule out a need for special education services or accommodations. Learning difficulties in bilingual students may appear to be due to second language acquisition, which may delay necessary services. In turn, a bilingual student may be receiving unnecessary special education services, which pull the student out of the appropriate, regular education classroom.

HOW IS A BILINGUAL EVALUATION DIFFERENT FROM A MONOLINGUAL-ENGLISH EVALUATION?

In a monolingual-English evaluation, a clinician may utilize a standardized, norm-referenced assessment that compares a particular student to a normative population that they belong. With bilingual students, however, there are no such assessment that perfectly suits a student as their language experience varies significantly. To meet this need, a bilingual evaluation includes a comprehensive case history interview with caregivers, classroom observation, formal and

informal assessments in both languages used by the student, and appropriate modifications and accommodations in order to reduce cultural and linguistic biases. All results are interpreted on a team-basis in order to make the correct diagnosis or recommendation.

HOW CAN MCIU SUPPORT YOU?

If the district would like to proceed with a bilingual psychological and/or speech and language evaluation through the MCIU, please submit a referral. Once the evaluation is complete, a full report will be sent. Additionally, MCIU offers speech and language consultative services to assist with cross-linguistic therapy goals, strategies, and materials.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Please contact: AnneMarie Taylor MS,CCC/SLP
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