

Alabama State Department of Education

Alternate Screening Checklist

The purpose of the *Alternate Screening Checklist* is to assist educators and families in the decision-making process for those potential English learner (EL) students who cannot meaningfully access the *WIDA Screener for Kindergarten* or the *WIDA Screener Online* (or if applicable *WIDA Screener Paper*). These screening assessments may not be appropriate for some students with disabilities. Potential EL students who may benefit from the *Alternate Screening Checklist* are:

- Students who have an IEP that indicates a significant cognitive disability
- Students who do not have an IEP, but will be evaluated by Special Education staff

If a potential EL student does not have an IEP that indicates a significant cognitive disability, but is considered to be a student who will require extensive supports, the Special Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) staff, in order to meet the 30-day deadline for screening potential EL students, or 10-day deadline if enrollment is after the first day of school, must have meaningful consultation to determine the possible use of the *Alternate Screening Checklist*. **This decision should be made, if there is agreement, that the student requires substantial supports and could not, even with accommodations, progress fully through any of the available screeners.**

If it is determined that the *Alternate Screening Checklist* is the most appropriate screening instrument, a team consisting of the following individuals must be convened to make the EL determination by utilizing the *Alternate Screening Checklist*:

- Person(s) with expertise in second language acquisition
- Special Education teacher
- School Counselor
- Service Professionals
- Speech or Language Impairment teacher (if applicable)
- General Education teacher
- Native Language/Sign Language Interpreter (if applicable)
- Parents, guardians, and/or caregivers

It is important that a **team-centered approach** is used to guide the decision that will be made during this process.

Alabama's Definition of an English Learner with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

English learners with the **most** significant cognitive disabilities are defined as individuals who have one or more disabilities that **significantly limit** their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as documented in their Individualized Education Programs, who require extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade and age appropriate curriculum, and who are progressing toward English language proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding.

Challenges in Identifying English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

*Both language-and disability-related challenges exist in identifying students who are English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. Some of these students may not be able to access all domains on the WIDA Screener Online or WIDA Screener Paper. Therefore, when an educator uses a screener, providing accessibility features and accommodations is critical. Even with such accommodations, however, many students' intellectual disabilities may inhibit their abilities to complete the screener or acquisition of valid findings for each student. Given this limitation and to ensure states meet standards set in the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, educators with knowledge of the student's language needs must serve on the student's IEP team (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2017, Ch. 6, p. 2). These experts are important assets in interpreting the student's screening results and in advising on additional criteria for determining the student status as an English learner. **Screening tools should not be the sole source of information.***

Alternate Screening Checklist

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

System: _____

School: _____

Participants' Names

Title/Position

Team members need to consider each of the following questions related to identifying potential ELs and providing language- and disability-related services. Answering these questions will help ensure students receive optimal services. If some of the questions do not apply, indicate this in the space provided.

- The Home Language Survey should also be utilized as a source of information.
- Information from this checklist will be used to develop the IEP and I-ELP.

Check that each box has been addressed by the team.

Prior to the meeting:

☐ Has the team gathered information from the student, parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s), school records (if applicable) language assessments, and/or special education assessments, regarding the student's previous educational experiences? If **yes**, which data were collected?

☐ Has the team reviewed the Home Language Survey to determine if a screener is needed? ☐ YES ☐ NO

☐ Has an interview been conducted with the parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s) that would produce valuable information that could assist the team in making a placement decision? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If **yes**, what information was found to be useful?

Questions for the parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s):

☐ What language, if any, (for example, Spanish, Chinese, English) does the student use to communicate at home?

☐ What language/communication system does the student use at home (i.e. spoken language, American Sign Language, gestures, communication device)?

☐ When using the student's communication system, can the student respond to simple commands spoken in English? ☐ YES ☐ NO In home language? ☐ YES ☐ NO

☐ What is the student's present level of performance at home as it pertains to language demands?

Does the student understand words or phrases spoken or written in English? ☐ YES ☐ NO

In home language? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Questions for the team:

☐ Would language services/supports equip the student to succeed in the classroom, school, home, or community?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Additional information if available:

☐ Have the student's parent(s), guardian(s), caregiver(s) been included in the decision-making process regarding language-related needs and the services/supports that will be provided if the student is identified as an English learner? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Additional information if available:

☐ Does the team feel that English language services are needed for this student? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Decision:

The Team has determined that the student will be identified as an EL and will receive Supplemental Title III Language Assistance services. ☐ YES ☐ NO

Signature of Parent, Guardian, or Caregiver

Date

Any student who qualifies as an EL based upon the use of the *Alternate Screening Checklist*, and does not currently have an IEP, must be evaluated for special education services.