



SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

Clarification on Term “Foundational Knowledge” Required in Speech or Language Impairment Criteria

The purpose of this document is to clarify the following language in the rule regarding required Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team members when considering speech or language impairment: “An educator with foundational knowledge in first and second language instruction and second language acquisition if the child is identified as an English Learner under [20 USC 7801 \(20\)](#)” ([Wis. Admin. Code § PI 11.36\(5\)\(e\)](#)).

What is 'foundational knowledge in first and second language instruction and second language acquisition'?

According to Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning, “foundational knowledge” is considered a lower-order cognitive skill, where the learner is able to remember facts, terms, and concepts as well as “define or elaborate upon a term” (Harvard n.d.). These are essential skills for learners before they are able to demonstrate higher-order cognitive skills, such as applying this knowledge to new content or situations (Harvard n.d.; Armstrong 2010).

Therefore, foundational knowledge in first and second language instruction and second language acquisition would require the professional to remember basic facts, terms, and concepts about language acquisition and instruction; they also would demonstrate the ability to define or elaborate to others the basic facts, terms and concepts about language acquisition and instruction.

Should an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher be included at the IEP team meeting of an English Learner being evaluated for special education?

When a student identified as an English Learner (EL) is being evaluated, it is strongly recommended that the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher be a member of the student’s IEP team. Students are not designated as EL until kindergarten and therefore ESL teachers are not

required to support preschool students who are potentially English Learners. If you suspect that a preschool student may be an English Learner, it may be appropriate to include a teacher of multilingual learners (i.e., EL/ESL teacher or multilingual teacher) as part of the IEP team. Such expertise may be beneficial if the IEP team is working to determine whether the student qualifies for a speech or language impairment and requires specially designed instruction (WI DPI 2021, #35).

Best Practice Recommendation: If an EL teacher services the student, a best practice recommendation is that the EL teacher attends the IEP meeting.

How does an IEP team member meet the expectations for 'foundational knowledge in first and second language instruction and second language acquisition'? (i.e., What 'counts'?)

There may be times when the SLP may want to be considered as the person who has foundational knowledge in first and second language instruction and second language acquisition.

While SLPs receive extensive training in the area of English language development through their coursework, training, and experience, training in second language acquisition is often not included. According to Hamayan, Marler, Sánchez López, and Damico (2013), as well as Dr. Paula Conroy at Pathways to Literacy (n.d.), foundational training in second language acquisition includes the following:

- principles of second language development
- stages of language acquisition
- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

If an IEP team member does not have foundational knowledge, how does an IEP team member acquire the training necessary to meet the expectations for 'foundational knowledge in first and second language instruction and second language acquisition'?

The following is a non-exhaustive list of resources and training opportunities to increase foundational knowledge in first and second language instruction and second language acquisition. Wisconsin DPI has plans to hold and record professional learning webinars on these topics and will provide resources to help build foundational knowledge of first and second language instruction and second language acquisition.

Linguistic Supports for all students who are learning a second language (i.e., supports for second language acquisition)

- [Linguistic supports resources via the Iris Center Website](#)
- [Promoting family involvement resources via the Iris Center Website](#)

Free coursework on second language acquisition

- [WI DPI Best Practices When Assessing English Learners](#) (4 parts; Courtney Seidel)
- [Leader’s Project Module: Normal Second Language Acquisition](#)

Purchased coursework through the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#)). See website for list of courses provided by ASHA.

Books and websites to build foundational knowledge of second language acquisition

- *Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services Second Edition* by (2013) by Else Hamayan, Barbara Marler, Cristina Sánchez López, and Jack Damico
 - This book includes special features designed to make it easier for schools to begin offering a continuum of services to English Learners. The following can be implemented via book study groups:
 - Team Activities
 - Checklists, Rating Scales, and Questionnaires
 - Questions for Discussion
- [Colorín Colorado Website: Language Acquisition Overview](#)
- [Iris Center Website: Language Acquisition Module](#)
- [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: Second Language Acquisition](#)

If an IEP team member does not have foundational knowledge, who in the school or district can meet the expectations for 'foundational knowledge in first and second language instruction and second language acquisition'?

As previously discussed, this requirement would typically include a Bilingual Education (023/1023) or ESL (395/1395) licensed teacher when one is available. In most circumstances, this teacher would also have knowledge and experience working with the student and may have assisted in identifying needs and services related to the student’s English Learner identification. Thus, a Bilingual or ESL teacher would be an important IEP team member to help identify whether the student was eligible for additional services (i.e., special education) and assist the IEP team with identifying any of the student’s unique disability-related needs.

When a teacher is not available within the district, the district may identify a Bilingual Education (023/1023) or ESL (395/1395) licensed teacher outside of the district, such as through a Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA), a neighboring LEA, or through other means.

References

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