

USE OF CRITERIA FOR DISMISSAL FROM SPEECH OR LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICES

The Criteria for Dismissal from Speech or Language Therapy Services address those circumstances which result in the termination of speech/language services, either permanently or for some specified time period, provided to a student by the speech-language pathologist. Many speech-language pathologists subscribe to the Code of Ethics of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Two “Rules of Ethics” that should be taken into account when contemplating the initiation or continuation of interventions include:

1. Individuals shall evaluate the effectiveness of services rendered and of products dispensed and shall provide services or dispense products only when benefit can reasonably be expected.
2. Individuals shall not guarantee the results of any treatment or procedure, directly or by implication; however, they may make a reasonable statement of prognosis.

It is important for the speech-language pathologist to use sound professional judgment and competency in recommending that services are no longer warranted. In some instances, intervention can be redirected through a resource room, a self-contained classroom, community-based instruction or the regular classroom to enhance overall communicative effectiveness and maintenance of acquired skills. The IEP Team may also make provisions to monitor progress of a student dismissed from speech/language therapy services.

Prior to recommending dismissal from speech/language services, the IEP Team should review the Factors to Consider in Dismissal. Justification for dismissal from speech/language services should be determined using the Criteria for Dismissal from Speech or Language Therapy Services and documented in narrative form on the conference decision form used for dismissal purposes. When dismissal is based on more than one criterion, all applicable criteria should be noted on the decision form.

Even if speech/language therapy services are discontinued, a student can be rereferred at a later date until he/she has successfully completed an educational program or he/she reaches age twenty-one (21). If a student is re-referred, the referral committee should compare the reason(s) for referral with information on the previous termination of speech/language therapy services provided to the student. The referral committee must then determine on an individual student basis the appropriate course of action to be taken. This may result in reevaluation of the student, a reinstatement of speech/language therapy services or a decision that no further consideration for speech/language therapy services is necessary.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN DISMISSAL FROM SPEECH OR LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICES

1. DURATION OF SERVICES

- a) What has been the duration of speech therapy service?
- b) What has been the duration of therapy for current goal(s)/objective(s)?

2. INTENSITY OF SERVICE

- a) How frequently does the student receive such therapy?
- b) Have alternative intensity levels of treatment been utilized?

3. MODE OF SERVICE

- a) Have alternative modes of service (individual therapy, group therapy, integrated therapy, etc.) been utilized to stimulate progress?
- b) Have various modes of service been used for a sufficient time period?

4. REVIEW OF EVALUATION DATA

- a) Does review of the evaluation data reflect an accurate diagnosis?
- b) Were appropriate goals/objective established?

5. FOCUS OF SERVICE

- a) Have treatment methods been appropriate for the diagnosed disorder?
- b) What has been the student's level of response to the treatment method(s)?
- c) Within the scope of the treatment program, has the student been able to progress to the next level of the program or a branch of that program?
- d) Has treatment been at an appropriate level for the child?

6. SETTING

- a) Have a variety of therapy settings been utilized (individual, group, integrated)?
- b) What is the student missing in the regular classroom during speech therapy?
- c) Have alternative therapy times (different time of day, etc.) been tried?
- d) Is SLP working with regular and/or special education teachers to assure curricular and/or instructional modifications are implemented if they are needed?

7. INDIVIDUALIZATION

- a) Has the SLP truly individualized instruction for the student?

8. PATTERN OF SERVICE DELIVERY

- a) How has therapy been provided in the past?
- b) What has been the focus of therapy in the past?
- c) Have there been gaps in service? (Has child moved frequently? Frequent absences?)

9. CAPACITY OF STUDENT FOR CHANGE (LONGITUDINAL VIEW)

- a) Has student been more responsive to therapy at times? Has there been a pattern of regression and/or progression? When has he/she been most responsive?
- b) How do other service providers regard the child's progress to date? His/her responsiveness to therapy?
- c) Does therapy and/or the IEP provide motivational incentives?
- d) Has the SLP maximized therapy when progress is being achieved?

10. ANALYSIS OF DYNAMICS OF THE SITUATION

- a) Is the SLP basing recommendation for dismissal on child's personality traits, etc.?
- b) Is the SLP dismissing child due to dislike of child, parent, situation with teacher, etc.?
- c) Have other situational dynamics influenced recommendation for dismissal?

11. SECOND OPINION

- a) Has the SLP sought the assistance of another qualified provider to furnish a second opinion?

12. CONTINUITY

- a) Are other service providers consistently reinforcing what the SLP is doing in therapy or is the SLP working in isolation?