



Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative

www.nlsec.org

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Evaluation: NLSEC Best Practices in Observations

Documented systematic observations are required for all special education evaluations. A systematic observation is one that is planned and is methodical in procedure and implementation. The observation can be anecdotal (descriptive narrative) and/or objective (frequencies, percentages, rates).

Classroom observation must:

- Relate to the reason for referral.
- Be conducted by someone other than the student's general education teacher (see criteria for requirements).
- Verify teacher perceptions of the presenting problem.
- Assist in decision making for eligibility.
- Cross-validate observations made by clinicians or teachers in other settings.
- Assist in identifying target areas for developing goals and objectives.
- Describe the student's level of functioning in large and small group settings.
- Relate observed behavior to the student's academic functioning.
- For SLD criteria identify the student's difficulties with processing information.
- Describe how the student performs in the area(s) of suspected underachievement.

April 2015