

New Mexico TEAM Professional Development Module: Speech or Language Impairment

[Slide 1] Welcome

Welcome to the New Mexico TEAM technical assistance module on making eligibility determinations under the category of speech or language impairment, also called SLI. This module will review the guidance of the NM TEAM section on SLI. During this module, you will sometimes be referred back to a different module or other resources for additional information. We encourage you to have a copy of the NM TEAM available and open to the section on SLI for reference during this module.

[Slide 2] Learner Objectives

After successfully completing this module, you will have the knowledge to use evaluation data effectively to make an eligibility determination under the category of SLI. Specifically, you will be able to: understand the federal definition of SLI, identify some common characteristics of SLI and the associated educational impact, and recognize special considerations for assessment for children with known or suspected SLI. Additionally, you will understand the highly recommended and potential components of an evaluation for SLI, know the criteria required for eligibility under the category of SLI, and understand how to document the team's eligibility determination decisions.

[Slides 3-4] Definition

[Slide 3] When teams are making eligibility determination decisions, IDEA outlines a two-step approach. Each of these steps involves responding to a specific question—the first question is “Does the child have a disability as defined by IDEA?” and the second question is “Does the child require specially designed instruction as a result of this disability?”

This module will walk you through answering those two questions. First, we'll talk about the definition of SLI, as defined by IDEA, to help you begin to better understand the disability itself. Next, we'll talk about the impact of the disability on educational performance to help you understand when a child might require specially designed instruction as a result of SLI. Later, after establishing this basic framework, we'll talk more specifically about the evaluation components and the eligibility determination decisions.

IDEA's definitions of disability terms are the cornerstones of eligibility determination decisions. The definition, combined with comprehensive assessment data, including detailed information about the child's background, educational strengths and needs, and other pertinent factors, helps schools, educators, and parents determine if the child is eligible for and in need of special education and related services. Please take a moment to read the IDEA definition of SLI and then we'll take a closer look at it.

[Slide 4] Now let's take a closer look at the definition. This definition of the disability will help teams answer the question: “Does the child have a disability as defined by IDEA?”

The eligibility category of SLI includes/refers to a range of communication disorders that are represented by two broad domains- speech disorders and language disorders. Speech disorders include articulation impairments, difficulty pronouncing sounds and words correctly, voice impairments, such as a “harsh” or “nasal” voice quality, and fluency disorders, such as stuttering. Language disorders include

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impairments in understanding and using language. We'll talk more about each of these language disorders later in the module. To be identified as a child with SLI, the child must have impairments in one or more of these areas.

It is important to remember that this disability must adversely affect the child's educational performance in order for him to be found eligible for special education and related services. We'll talk about this second step to eligibility determination decisions by first talking about educational performance in general and then looking specifically at issues related to SLI.

[Slides 5-11] Educational Performance

[Slide 5] To determine the impact of a disability on a child's educational performance, the team needs to answer the question: "Does the child require specially designed instruction as a result of this disability?" If a child with a disability does not require specially designed instruction, then the child would not qualify under IDEA and teams should consider the implementation of a Section 504 plan or other classroom interventions to address the child's needs.

[Slide 6] According to IDEA, specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to meet the unique needs that result from a child's disability. This includes special education.

[Slide 7] In New Mexico, services provided by a speech-language pathologist may also be considered special education, not simply a related service, if the services meet the requirements outlined in the New Mexico Administrative Code, typically referred to as NMAC.

[Slide 8] When evaluating a child for potential eligibility for special education and related services under the eligibility category of SLI, according to IDEA, it is important that teams remember to consider three aspects of the child's educational performance. This includes the child's ability to: be involved and make progress in the general education curriculum, participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities, and be educated and participate with other children with and without disabilities.

[Slide 9] Teams are probably most familiar and most comfortable with the first of these areas: determining if a child's disability results in a need for specially designed instruction in order to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum. While this includes academic progress, it may also include social skills, problem solving, communication, and other general curriculum areas.

[Slide 10] Second, it is also important for teams to consider whether a child needs specially designed instruction in order to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities, such as recess, sports, choir, drama, and other clubs or school-related activities. For example, a child with SLI may be performing satisfactorily in classroom activities because of the amount of supports inherent in the classroom environment. However, this child may have difficulty with participation in extracurricular activities, like soccer or choir, because of the interaction between his disability and the nature of the activities. According to IDEA, this child may be found eligible for special education and related services

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because of the impact of his disability on his ability to participate in these activities. An example of this might be a child with SLI who requires supplementary aids and services to participate in after-school clubs. It is important to recognize that IDEA doesn't guarantee children access to competitive teams or groups **because** of their disability. However, they should be permitted the same opportunity as other children to try out for the activities and/or teams. The New Mexico Activities Association provides guidance regarding academic eligibility for participation for children enrolled in special education programs.

[Slide 11] The third and final area for teams to consider is the child's ability to be educated and participate with other children, including those with and without disabilities. This is essentially a question of educational environment. For example, a child with SLI may be able to access the general **curriculum** and participate in extracurricular activities, but because of his disability, it may be especially difficult for him to be educated in the general education classroom. This is not a discussion about where services will be delivered, but what services are necessary. For example, an eligibility determination team, or EDT, may determine that a child with challenging behaviors needs specially designed instruction in order to develop and support appropriate classroom behaviors and interactions. Other examples include a child with attention difficulties who requires specially designed instruction to learn strategies to improve his attention and focus in the classroom, or a child who needs specially designed instruction in the form of social skills interventions in order to participate in activities with peers. Where the first question teams ask relates to access to curriculum, this question addresses the educational setting for the child.

Now that we've talked in general about educational performance, let's look specifically at the possible adverse effects of SLI on a child's education.

[Slides 12-19] Characteristics and Educational Impact

[Slide 12] We're going to highlight some of the developmental areas that are commonly impacted by SLI to help teams identify characteristics that may suggest that a child has SLI. As we discuss the different areas, we will highlight characteristics and educational impact for both preschool-aged and school-aged children with SLI. Although we're examining the same developmental areas for both age groups, the characteristics may be manifested in different ways depending on the developmental level of the child and the demands of the environment. It is important to recognize that the effects of SLI will vary considerably, depending in large part upon the interaction between the child's characteristics, and the school, family, and community supports.

To identify the educational impact for a child with SLI, the EDT must examine the demands of various settings and environments and the child's abilities to meet those demands by addressing the question of "How do the characteristics of the disability manifest in the child's natural environments (including home, classroom, recess, and others)?" This determination needs to be made at a very individual level for each child and must be based on comprehensive information about the child and his environments, including information gained from observing a child's functional and academic performance across a variety of settings.

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[Slide 13] The characteristics under the category of SLI, as mentioned previously, are organized around two domains: speech and language. These domains each include a range of skills that may be impacted by SLI.

[Slide 14] When looking at the domain of speech, both preschool-aged and school-aged children with SLI may have difficulty correctly articulating developmentally appropriate sounds, speaking in a voice that sounds similar to that of other children of the same age and sex, and/or speaking fluently. Speech disorders may impact the ability of preschool-aged children to be understood by others and speak clearly enough to express their basic wants and needs. School-aged children with deficits in speech may be less likely to participate in daily educational activities such as volunteering in class discussions and reading aloud, and/or engaging socially in conversations with their peers.

[Slide 15] In the area of language, both preschool-aged and school-aged children with SLI may show deficits in many areas, including expressive language, receptive language, and/or social-pragmatic skills. In addition, there are many underlying skills required for effective expressive and receptive language, such as phonological skills.

[Slide 16] Expressive language is a child's ability to express his wants, needs, and feelings and to share information with others. Typically when we think of expressive language, we think of a child's verbal skills; however, it can also include such things as gesturing, use of sign language, etc. Preschool-aged children with expressive language deficits may not be able to indicate when they need to go to the bathroom, ask permission to do something, or interact with other children in a play setting. These children may be misunderstood and sometimes develop challenging behaviors related to their frustration with communication. School-aged children with deficits in expressive language may demonstrate challenges in formulating grammatically correct sentences which may lead to misunderstandings and/or lower expectations on the part of parents, teachers, and peers. They may also have difficulty providing adequate information regarding people, places, or events, or elaborating on topics. In addition, these children may not have age-appropriate vocabulary, which can impact their ability to participate in social and academic conversations.

[Slide 17] Receptive language is a child's ability to listen and understand information presented to them. Again, typically, we consider a child's verbal receptive language, but it is important to recognize that children who use different forms of communication, such as sign-language or pictures, may also demonstrate receptive language deficits. Preschool-aged children with receptive-language deficits may have trouble following directions at home or in the classroom, which may lead to frustration and challenging behaviors. They also may have difficulty answering age-appropriate questions because of problems understanding what is being asked even though their knowledge on the topic may be good. For example, this may become evident when being asked to share about their day or talk about activities in the classroom or at home. Preschool-aged children may have trouble learning and remembering the names of objects and pictures and may also have difficulty learning language-based concepts, such as sizes, positions, and others. School-aged children with receptive language deficits may

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have difficulty understanding classroom discussions, instruction, and directions, which can contribute to academic deficits because they are unable to access the classroom content. Additionally, because of their receptive language difficulties, school-aged children with receptive language impairments may have difficulty learning age-appropriate and curriculum-based vocabulary. A receptive language deficit can also impact a child's ability to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with peers due to difficulty understanding all of the language involved in friendships.

[Slide 18] Pragmatic skills, or social use of language, is the third component of language development that may be impaired in a child with SLI. Both preschool- and school-aged children with deficits in this area may show difficulty interacting appropriately with peers and adults in both social and academic settings. EDTs must remember that what is considered "appropriate" changes as a child gets older. Social language becomes more complex as a child grows older, in part because of the expectations and tolerance for children of different ages. As a result, deficits in this area may become more pronounced and may lead to further social and emotional difficulties as a child gets older. Children with difficulties with their pragmatic skills may have difficulty participating appropriately in group activities, due in part to difficulty taking turns, starting and maintaining conversations with others, and repairing communication break-downs.

[Slide 19] Phonological skills may also be impaired in children with SLI. Preschool-aged children may exhibit difficulties with phonological skills, which may be evident in difficulty singing songs, learning and repeating nursery rhymes, and discriminating between sounds. These children may struggle with early literacy activities, may have difficulty speaking clearly, and may sometimes misunderstand others when listening to them. School-aged children with phonological skill deficits may demonstrate significant challenges learning to read and write. To be a good reader, children rely heavily on phonological skills. When these skills are not well-developed, children often read slowly, have difficulty reading unfamiliar words, and spend so much time on the mechanics of reading that they are unable to understand what they've read. These deficits may lead to widespread academic difficulties.

Please refer to the "Characteristics and Educational Impact" section of the NM TEAM for more detailed information in each of these areas, but remember that the characteristics presented in NM TEAM are not meant to be exhaustive nor is the NM TEAM suggesting that all children with SLI will demonstrate all of the presented characteristics. It is important for teams to recognize that these characteristics may lead to limited opportunities for engaging in age-appropriate activities, opportunities to be educated with peers, and the learning that accompanies these activities.

[Slides 20-21] Special Considerations for Assessment

[Slide 20] It is important for EDTs to be aware of issues related to evaluating young children and children with known or suspected disabilities, regardless of the eligibility categories being considered. For example, when evaluating young children, it is imperative that the impact of the family, home environment, home language, and developmental history be considered. Specifically, EDTs must

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determine that a possible lack of exposure to developmentally appropriate activities is not the **primary** reason for the child's difficulties. In addition, for a child with a known or suspected disability, EDTs must ensure that the assessment results accurately reflect the areas being assessed. For example, be careful that you are not measuring the child's sensory, motor, or speaking skills, unless those are the skills you *wish* to assess. Please review NM TEAM section 6 for more information on these issues.

[Slide 21] One critical consideration for teams related to assessment of children for SLI is gathering data to support the EDT in differentiating a speech or language impairment from a speech or language difference. A speech or language difference is evident when a child's primary form of communication differs from that used by most people in a particular community. These differences may be due to bilingualism, dialectical or cultural differences in language use, or being non-English dominant. Communication differences must not be considered a disorder of speech or language. That said, it is possible that a child with a speech or language difference also demonstrates a speech or language impairment. Like with all eligibility categories, the EDT must determine the primary cause for the child's difficulties. If they determine that the child's difficulties are mostly related to a speech or language difference, then the child would not be eligible under the category of SLI. However, if the child demonstrates deficits that are not primarily associated with a speech or language difference, the child could be eligible under the category of SLI. Remember that a child can be eligible under the category of SLI and have a speech or language difference as long as the EDT has determined that the primary cause for the child's difficulties is the SLI, not the difference.

[Slides 22-30] Initial Evaluation: Speech or Language Impairment

[Slide 22] To answer the questions on the eligibility determination worksheets and make eligibility decisions, it is important to discuss the evaluation components that are outlined in the NM TEAM. A number of the components are the same across most, if not all, of the eligibility categories. These components are outlined and discussed in the Conducting Initial Evaluations Module.

Although many of the evaluation components differ for speech disorders and language disorders, several of them are the same. We are going to begin by discussing the highly recommended evaluations components that are the same for both speech and language evaluations. These common components are listed on the screen in front of you and in the NM TEAM under the SLI section. All of them are important and should be addressed in an evaluation, but some of the elements need to be discussed in a bit more depth to help evaluators more clearly understand the component within the context of SLI.

Please remember that the assessments chosen must be tailored to assess specific areas of suspected disability and educational need. Assessment of children for whom SLI is suspected should be multidisciplinary and comprehensive and conducted by individuals experienced in evaluating individuals with SLI. There is no single definitive assessment for suspected SLI. Thus, the use of multiple tools, as well as the professional judgment and skill of the professionals who conducted the evaluation, will ensure accurate findings. Please remember that the NM TEAM provides information about common characteristics of children with SLI—this information can help EDTs identify if SLI may be an appropriate eligibility category for consideration.

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Let's start by talking about the four evaluation components that are the same for speech disorders and language disorders: information gathered during a review of existing data, the child's history, direct observations of the child's communication behavior obtained through a functional communication assessment, and transition. When evaluating a child for suspected SLI, EDTs should pay particular attention to information suggesting that the child has a history of difficulty developing and using communication skills. It is important that EDTs observe the children across a variety of settings. These different observations will provide EDTs with valuable information about the child's skills, including his ability to communicate and use language to learn and function in a variety of situations. For children with suspected speech disorders, EDTs would pay particular attention to information about the child's ability to produce speech sounds, the quality of his voice, and his ability to speak fluently. For children with language disorders, EDTs should pay particular attention to indicators that the child has difficulty understanding language, generating language, or using language appropriately in a variety of settings. We'll discuss each of these elements in more detail as we talk about the specific assessment elements for suspected speech disorders and for suspected language disorders.

[Slide 23] Finally, it is important to recognize that decisions regarding transition assessments need to be highly individualized for each child and situation. In New Mexico, transition planning must be documented on the first IEP in effect when the child turns 14 or during their 8th grade year, whichever happens sooner. This type of transition planning specifically relates to the child's progression from the public schools to post-secondary settings. However, EDTs should recognize first, that this planning may need to start earlier for some children and second, that transitions occur throughout a child's school tenure. For example, children transition from preschool to elementary school, from elementary school to middle school, between schools, and so on. EDTs should ensure that they have the information necessary to support children through all of these critical transitions, as appropriate for each individual child.

[Slide 24] Now that we've talked about these four elements that are highly recommended components for all children with suspected SLI, we will talk about the unique components of a speech evaluation. There are common elements for all speech evaluations, as well as specific elements for concerns related to articulation, voice, and fluency.

First, for all children with a known or suspected speech disorder, a comprehensive evaluation must include assessments of speech intelligibility, an oral motor exam, and a spontaneous speech sample focusing on the area of concern. These evaluations will give the EDT useful information about how well the child is able to produce isolated and connected sounds during both structured and unstructured activities. The oral mechanism and oral motor exam will provide critical information that will help the EDT determine if the child's speech problems are related to a structural- or motor-based problem.

In addition, there are specific additional assessments that must be conducted based on the referral concern: articulation, voice, or fluency.

[Slide 25] For articulation, an evaluation must also include an examination of how the child uses and understands sounds, as well as determining whether the child has the potential to generate the sounds with supports, such as auditory, tactile, or visual cues.

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[Slide 26] For voice concerns, a complete evaluation must include a description of the child's voice quality that is based on formal and/or informal measures. This description should include information about the child's voice volume, the sound of his voice, and how the quality of his voice compares to other children of the same age and gender. EDTs and evaluators must remember that a speech-language pathologist can begin an evaluation of a child with a suspected voice disorder without related medical information, but that decisions regarding therapy must be deferred until a diagnostic medical evaluation is completed.

[Slide 27] For fluency concerns, an evaluation must include information about both the nature of the child's fluency difficulties and any related behaviors. As one example, the evaluator must examine how the child's breathing supports his speaking. In addition, the evaluator should document any behaviors that the child uses to compensate for or demonstrates in response to his fluency problems. For example, some children use strategies such as using different words as substitutes for the word he is stuck on. This information, along with information about the child's emotional response to dysfluency provides valuable information that will assist in developing an appropriate educational program for the child.

[Slide 28] Now that we've talked about the specific components for speech evaluations, we will talk about the components that are unique to language evaluations.

First, EDTs must gather information regarding the child's communication using both structured and unstructured methods. For example, a functional communication assessment will provide valuable information about how a child uses language in everyday activities at home and at school. This should include information about how the child uses language in both academic and social settings, as well as with both peers and adults. A child's communication skills can vary dramatically depending on the demands of the setting and the nature of the interaction, so a comprehensive evaluation of his functional communication skills should include evaluation of his skills across setting and communication partners. In addition to this information about the child's functional language use, evaluations should include a formal assessment of the child's receptive and expressive language skills in order to begin to identify specific areas of concern. These evaluations should include information about the content of the child's language, the form of his language, which includes how he uses word endings like -ing and how he structures his sentences, and how he uses language functionally when interacting with other people.

Finally, a careful review of the child's academic achievement performance is an important part of an evaluation for a child with a suspected language disorder. Language development and use plays a critical role in learning new information, because language is the primary means through which children participate in learning opportunities. Difficulty participating in these opportunities, including understanding and using language, can contribute to academic achievement problems. A formal language evaluation may be necessary in order to provide information necessary to identify these problems and to develop an appropriate educational program for the child. A thorough review of the child's academic achievement will guide EDTs in determining whether a formal assessment in this area is needed.

[Slides 29-30] Potential Additional Components

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[Slide 29] It is the responsibility of the team to answer any questions that may arise throughout the evaluation process, including what eligibility category best describes the child's primary disability and what supports and services the child needs. The highly recommended evaluation components that we've discussed should help teams answer many of the questions that they might have, but in some situations, teams may require additional information. NM TEAM presents a list of potential additional components that can be found in the Initial Evaluation section of the NM TEAM category of SLI. This list may be helpful as teams make eligibility determination decisions, but should not be considered as the only additional areas that the EDT may wish to explore. We will talk about a few of those components now.

For a child with a suspected SLI, whether it be related to speech or language, an audiological evaluation may be important. This evaluation will help EDTs identify if a hearing impairment is contributing to a child's speech and/or language difficulties by ruling out an undiagnosed hearing impairment.

[Slide 30] In addition, for a child with a suspected language disorder, formal assessment in the area of academic achievement may be necessary, as we've discussed previously. In addition, it may be appropriate to conduct an assistive technology evaluation in order to identify supports that will lead to the development of an appropriate educational program for the child.

[Slides 31-43] Eligibility Determination Process for Speech or Language Impairment

[Slide 31] Before we examine criteria that are specific to the eligibility determination decision for SLI, we would like to remind you that general information regarding the eligibility process and use of the eligibility determination worksheets is presented in the module, "Eligibility Determination and Use of Eligibility Determination Worksheets." We encourage you to listen to that module and to review the information presented in the NM TEAM in "Section Six. Essential Components of Eligibility Determination."

For this discussion, you will find it helpful to refer specifically to the "Eligibility Determination" and "Eligibility Determination Worksheets" sections within the SLI chapter of the NM TEAM.

To determine that a child is eligible for special education and related services as a child with SLI, an EDT must first determine that the child is a child with a disability, and second that the child demonstrates a need for specialized instruction as a result of his disability.

[Slide 32] The Eligibility Determination Worksheets are structured to guide the EDT in making these decisions. They provide a detailed road map to guide teams not only in working through the process, but also in documenting their decisions. We will use the SLI worksheet as a guide for the rest of this discussion.

[Slide 33] First, the EDT must document relevant identifying information and the assessment and evaluation data they have collected and will be using in the eligibility determination process. This information should reflect data collected from multiple data sources.

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[Slide 34] Second, under the “Determine the presence of a disability” section, the EDT will address four questions that specifically relate to determining if a child has SLI.

[Slide 35] The first two questions, questions 1 and 2, which are consistent across almost all of the eligibility categories, require that the EDT discuss determinant factors related to the child’s performance, specifically the lack of appropriate instruction in reading and math, as well as limited English proficiency. Essentially EDTs must consider all of the factors contributing to the child’s difficulties and decide which factors are the primary cause or causes of the child’s difficulties. Like all decisions, these decisions must be made based on comprehensive evaluation data and with the input of all of the members of the EDT. It is important that EDTs recognize that a child may have experienced a lack of appropriate instruction and/or have limited English proficiency, but if these factors are not the primary reasons for the child’s difficulties, they would not be considered determinant factors. Once the EDT has ruled out either of these factors, they check “Yes” on the Worksheet. This communicates that “Yes, they have eliminated the possibility that one of these factors is a determinant factor.” If the EDT is considering more than one potential eligibility category, these first two question would be answered the same and use the same documentation across all of the categories. EDTs may find it useful to complete multiple worksheets simultaneously if they are considering more than one eligibility category. Additionally, EDTs should remember that lack of appropriate instruction for preschool-aged children is considered to be a lack of opportunities to participate in developmentally appropriate activities. It is important to remember that the lack of opportunities must be due to a reason other than the nature of the child’s disability in order for it to be considered a determinant factor. For example, it may be that a young child has significant behavioral challenges that make it difficult for the family to involve the child in family and community activities. In this situation, even though the child has had a lack of opportunity to participate in these activities, EDTs should not consider this as the determinant factor for the child’s learning difficulties. Rather, this information might be helpful and used as further documentation to support a decision that indicates that a child is eligible for special education and related services.

[Slide 36] The third question relates specifically to the eligibility criteria for SLI. In order to be found eligible under this category, the child must have a documented speech or language impairment that is at least two standard deviations below the mean. EDTs should remember that these scores should not be considered in isolation, but that they should be contextualized within the child’s social and educational history. These scores should be interpreted by the professionals administering the assessments in order to attend to contextual issues such as the age of the child, the validity of the assessment itself, issues that occur during the administration of the assessment, etc. Multiple data sources should be used to support the validity of standardized assessment results, including classroom based assessments, work samples, and other data sources. If the information between these data sources is discrepant, EDTs should very closely examine the assessment data obtained and determine if more information needs to be gathered in order to obtain a clear and accurate understanding of the child’s abilities. For more information on the use of standardized scores and the use of standard error of measurement, please refer to Section 5 of the NMTEAM.

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[Slide 37] The fourth and final question to be addressed is also consistent across all eligibility categories, like the questions related to the determinant factors. In this case, the EDT is determining if any other eligibility category better describes the child's disability. It is possible that a child demonstrates more than one disability, but if the EDT determines that SLI **best** describes the child's disability, they would respond "Yes, we've determined that no other category better describes the child's disability." On the other hand, if the child has SLI but also has another disability and the other disability better describes the child, the EDT would answer "No, we've determined that another category better describes this child's disability." In either case, it is likely that the EDT will need to complete the "Determine the presence of a disability" section on one or more worksheets for the other eligibility categories being considered.

In addition to answering each of the questions "yes" or "no" in this section, it is critical that the EDT briefly describe the documentation that supported each of their decisions.

[Slide 38] Each of the four questions serves as a stopping point in the process if the EDT answers "no." Once the EDT has answered "no" to any of the four questions, they have determined that the child is not a child with SLI. If this occurs, the EDT should stop moving through those four questions. If the EDT either is not considering another potential eligibility category or has already completed the "Determine the presence of a disability" section for other potential categories, the EDT should move to the "Determination of eligibility for special education and related services" section of the worksheet. At this point, the EDT will document the determination that "The child is not eligible under the eligibility category of SLI." They also need to indicate why that decision was reached by indicating either that the child doesn't have SLI or that a different category best describes the child's disability. The process then stops for this eligibility category.

The response to all of the four questions in this section of the worksheet must be "yes" in order to proceed to the section of the worksheet, "Determination of the need for specially designed instruction." Remember, if you have even one "no" response, you skip over the "Determination of the need for specially designed instruction" section.

[Slide 39] To determine the need for specially designed instruction, using the assessment and evaluation data collected, the EDT must determine if, as a result of SLI, the child requires special education and related services in one or more areas outlined in IDEA.

[Slide 40] These areas include: being involved in and making progress in the general education curriculum or developmentally appropriate activities; participating in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and/or being educated and participating with other children with and without disabilities. The EDT must answer "yes" to at least one of the questions in this section of the worksheet to say that the child requires specially designed instruction because of needs resulting from SLI.

[Slide 41] After answering these three questions, the EDT moves into the final phase of the eligibility determination process—documenting the final eligibility determination decision. This section of the worksheet, "Determination of eligibility for special education and related services," allows EDTs to

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document that either the child is eligible for special education and related services under the category of SLI, is not eligible under the category of SLI, or that more information needs to be collected to make a determination.

[Slide 42] If the EDT determines that the results of the evaluation indicate that the child requires specially designed instruction as a result of SLI, the child would be eligible under the category of SLI.

[Slide 43] If the EDT determines that the child is not eligible under the category of SLI, they must indicate the rationale for that decision by checking one of the four options within that decision. These options allow EDTs to document either that the child doesn't have SLI or any other disability, that the child does not have SLI, but is eligible under another eligibility category, that the child has SLI but another eligibility category better describes the child's primary disability, or that the child has SLI, but doesn't demonstrate a need for specially designed instruction. This section allows for the documentation that a different eligibility category better describes the primary disability.

EDTs should clearly read the questions presented on the worksheet and determine which situation most accurately describes the child being evaluated. Any child who is found to be "not eligible" for special education and related services must be referred to the SAT.

Finally, if the EDT is unable to make an eligibility determination, they may identify additional information that need to be gathered. They would then reconvene later to make the final eligibility determination decision.

[Slide 44]: Reevaluation and Discontinuation of Services

The Reevaluation worksheets in the NM TEAM will support the EDT through the documentation and decision-making process during reevaluations.

Any child whose special education services are discontinued should promptly be referred to the SAT at his or her school to ensure that the child is supported in this important transition period. Monitoring of social skills, behavior, communication, current levels of academic performance, and independence may continue to be necessary, even if special education supports are discontinued.

[Slide 45]: Closing

Thank you for participating in this NM TEAM training module. We hope this information has been helpful in clarifying and expanding on the information presented in the manual.