

Documentation of Physical/Sensory Disabilities

I. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation

- Name, title, professional credentials, licensure/certification information, and location of practice must be included on any reports submitted.
- Evaluators must have training in, and experience with, the diagnosis of like or similar conditions in adults.
- Appropriate professionals are usually licensed physicians, often with specialty training. Optometrists are appropriate for visual conditions addressed in their training. Allied health professionals (such as audiologists, neuropsychologists, or physical therapists) may be considered appropriate as well.
- Evaluations performed by members of the student's family are not acceptable.
- All reports must be signed by the primary evaluator, and should include a completed DMS form (if feasible), as well as any additional information typed on letterhead.

II. Documentation must be current

- Reports should be based on evaluations performed within a reasonable time frame, depending on the degree of change associated with the diagnosed condition(s). Generally a reasonable time frame is not more than three years, but it may be much shorter in some instances.
- Reports should accurately describe the *current* impact of the diagnosed condition.
- They should indicate the *currently* anticipated course of the condition.
- They should mention any *currently* mitigating factors (e.g. medication or hearing aids).

III. Documentation must be comprehensive

- Reports should include a history.
- Reports should include both description and evidence of impairment.
- They should briefly describe any current treatment plan.
- A specific diagnosis (or more than one) must be included.
- Documentation should address any coexisting conditions, suspected coexisting conditions, or other confounding factors.
- Documentation must indicate whether or not the diagnosed condition(s) rises to the level of a disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA (substantially limiting a major life activity).
- There must be a clear indication of the individual student's functional limitations.
- Documentation should include recommendations for accommodations that are directly related to the functional limitations (and relevant to a school environment if possible.)
- A rationale, explaining why each recommendation for accommodation is appropriate, should be provided.
- If the student is considered a potential danger to self or others, including patients under his or her care, that information must be included. If there are only certain circumstances under which a potential danger exists, that should be explained as well.