

Gifted Identification

At what age may a child be identified?

Colorado law requires all public schools, including charter schools, to identify and serve students between the ages of **five** and **twenty-one**, and age four in districts that have an Early Access plan that has been approved by the state. Preschool identification and services are optional. Recognition of strengths and responding to this potential in the early years may be an approach used by a district/school prior to formal identification. Many districts screen for exceptional potential by the end of second grade. However, if a student demonstrates gifted abilities prior to this time, identification may occur at any time.

What are the laws that pertain to gifted identification in Colorado?

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) Rules can be found on the Colorado Department of Education, Office of Gifted Education website under the Laws and Regulations tab.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/lawsregs>

Rules provide definitions and guidelines for programming elements such as: Parent, student and family engagement; identification procedures; Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) procedures; personnel; budget; evaluation; and accountability.

What happens if an identified child moves to another district? Another state?

In Colorado, identification transfers with the child if he/she is moving to another district in the state. In Colorado law, this is called "portability" of identification. If the receiving district does not find a body of evidence to support the identification, the receiving district may conduct further assessment to confirm identification. If a student moves to another state, the new state may or may not honor the identification based on their state laws and regulations governing gifted identification. Unlike special education, gifted education is not mandated by federal law.

Who can refer a child for possible gifted identification?

Colorado law states that a district should have multiple types of referrals, from multiple sources and at multiple times during a student's educational career. An educator, coach, parent or student may submit a referral. Districts may have different types of referral forms. These referral documents may be located on a district's gifted website or by contacting district gifted personnel.

If a referral is made for possible gifted identification, does this automatically mean the child will be tested?

A referral made for possible gifted identification does not necessarily lead to the administration of specific cognitive or achievement assessments. The identification team will carefully consider the referral, examine current assessment data the student may have and then determine appropriate next steps. This may or may not include administering additional tests to the student.

**Once a referral is made, how soon will a decision be made about identification?**

Colorado law specifies an identification team has a timeline of no more than 30 school days after a referral is received to determine whether a student will be formally identified or if more time is needed to continue with identification assessment. The team's decision should be communicated to the parent, student and other educators. This does not mean an identification determination must be made within 30 days, rather all stakeholders should receive information on intended next steps of the identification process within this time frame.

What tests might be used for identification?

Districts have a choice as to what assessment tools are used in the student's body of evidence. Typically, the following instruments are used in a body of evidence for identification: tests of cognitive ability; standardized achievement tests; norm-referenced behavior rating scales; performance observation data; and anecdotal data collected from teachers and the student.

Does a child have to have a certain score on these tests to qualify as gifted?

ECEA Rules define the criteria used for identification. This includes demonstration in the body of evidence of an advanced level on performance assessments and/or ninety-fifth percentile and above on standardized, norm-referenced assessments. Not meeting criteria on a single assessment tool shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for gifted identification, if other indicators suggest exceptional potential as observed in a body of evidence.

Is the parent part of the identification process?

Colorado Rules state parents should have the opportunity to provide input in the identification process. There is an expectation that parents will provide insight into the needs and interests of their child, and their input can add value to the identification process. If a parent is requested to complete a norm-referenced observation scale, a district may choose to use this as qualifying evidence for identification.

In what areas might a child be identified?

ECEA Rules define the areas for identification to include:

- General and Specific Intellectual Ability
- Specific Academic Aptitude to include: reading, writing, math, science, social studies and world languages
- Specific Talent Aptitude to include: visual arts, performing arts, music, dance, psychomotor, creative/productive thinking, and leadership

A student may be defined in one or more of these areas.

What will happen after a child is identified?

After identification, the parents, school staff and the student will work together to develop an individualized Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). The ALP will include achievement and affective annual goals for the student and describe the type of programming services that will be provided to meet the unique educational needs of the newly identified student.

Where can I learn more?

- Office of Gifted Education: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt>
- Contact your district's gifted education administrator