



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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April 14, 2009

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors, Exceptional Children Programs  
Directors, Charter Schools

FROM: Mary N. Watson, Director *MNW*  
Exceptional Children Division

RE: Hearing Screening Procedures and Qualifications

The Exceptional Children Division has received inquiries recently about procedures and qualifications for administering hearing screenings during the evaluation process. Hearing screenings are required when evaluating for eligibility in most disability areas, as listed in NC 1503-2.5 of *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, and must be administered by qualified personnel. Audiologists and physicians are primarily qualified as hearing screening administrators. According to General Statute 90-294, licensed speech-language pathologists, speech-language pathology assistants, nurses and unlicensed persons may also perform hearing screenings, provided that they have been properly trained by a licensed audiologist or physician and that the screening program is formally under the supervision of a licensed audiologist or physician. Speech-language pathologists or others may not provide the training or supervision.

Hearing screenings, also known as audiometric screenings, are the presentation of pure tone stimuli at fixed intensity using pass/fail criteria requiring no interpretation by the person administering the screening, as defined in 21 NCAC 64.0212 of the North Carolina Administrative Code. For preschool, hard-to-test or intellectually disabled students, a traditional pure tone audiometric screening procedure may not be appropriate or satisfactory. In these cases, conditioned play audiometry, Otoacoustic Emissions with Tympanometry, or Automated Brainstem Response may be used and have the same qualified personnel requirements for administration. If none of these methods are effective, it must be treated as if the child failed the hearing screening.

Students must be referred for an audiological evaluation if they fail a hearing screening. In general, the audiological evaluation should be administered before progressing with other evaluation components (e.g., psychological evaluation, educational evaluation, etc.); however, this must not result in failure to meet the 90-day timeline for completing all evaluations, reaching eligibility determination and, if applicable, developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Results of the audiological evaluation must be considered in the administration and interpretation of results of all other evaluation components.

If there are other questions about hearing screenings in the evaluation process, please contact Dr. Rachael Ragin, State Consultant for Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Audiology, at [rragin@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:rragin@dpi.state.nc.us) or 919/807-3990.

MNW/TW/RR/pp

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