

Planning a Spanish and English evaluation

A practical route from referral to follow up

Leave planning with one answerable question, an accessible task, and a follow-up decision.

Prepare

Review the referral and language history. Ask the family and teacher for one concrete example each.

Plan your time

Allow about 5–10 minutes to complete the planning sheet once background information is available. This editorial estimate is not an evaluation duration.

Have ready

Referral, language and schooling history, family priority, access information, and the planning sheet.

Use one focused route

Choose the closest case → plan one observation → identify what would change the next step. Read the other cases later.

Record enough to decide

Task, languages and communication modes, supports, exact concern, missing evidence, and who will obtain it by when.

Evidence behind the practice

ASHA provides professional guidance; IDEA establishes US school evaluation requirements. This decision map is an original synthesis, not a validated algorithm. [1–3, 7]

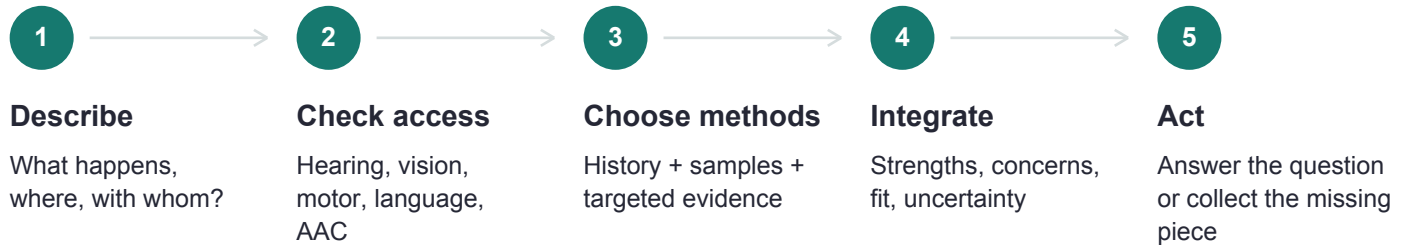
Interpretation limit

Begin needed language and access supports while completing a timely evaluation. Do not postpone evaluation simply to wait for more English exposure.

Make the next session answer a question

Write the communication problem as an activity: “Explain a playground disagreement,” rather than “Obtain a language score.”

Follow the evidence



Use multiple sources. Limited English proficiency must not be the determinant factor in US school disability eligibility. [2, 7]

Ask the caregiver ¿Cuándo se le hace fácil comunicarse? Cuénteme qué pasó la última vez que necesitó ayuda para expresarse.
Get an example, not only a concern label.

Ask the teacher What was the task, what did the child communicate, and what changed after support?
Separate task demands from assumptions about ability.

Concern	Useful starting evidence
Speech clarity	Single words + connected speech in used languages; family intelligibility examples
Words or grammar	History + language samples + language-specific probes
Learning	Accessible baseline + recorded teaching + retest/transfer
Little speech or AAC	Communication functions + access + supported observation

Before selecting a score

Check the child’s age, languages and varieties, experience, schooling, access and the tool’s intended use. Arrange linguistic expertise when needed. [1, 3]

03 FICTIONAL TRAINING CASES

Two children two different plans

Similar referrals can require very different methods.

Case A Sofía age 5

Spanish is the primary home language. English became part of daily schooling this year. The teacher reports difficulty following English classroom explanations. The family describes successful Spanish play and conversation.

Clinician

Cuando juegan en casa, ¿cómo le va cuando usted le pide que haga algo? ¿Qué hace si no entiende?

Ask for familiar-context examples.

Plan

Observe a familiar task in Spanish, sample both languages as feasible, and document English instruction and opportunities.

A Spanish tool is a candidate only after checking its population and scoring rules.

Interpretation move: Check the same communication need in familiar Spanish contexts and examine what instruction makes accessible. Family strengths are evidence to investigate, not proof that no disorder is present. Support English learning while completing the evaluation. [1, 2]

Case B Daniel age 5

Daniel's family identifies as Latino. He uses English throughout the day and understands a few Spanish routines. His family and teacher report difficulty explaining events in English.

Clinician

Which language lets Daniel tell you the most? Give me a recent example.

Identity does not establish language proficiency.

Plan

Prioritize accessible English assessment and family history; document the specific Spanish experience.

PLS 5 Spanish is not intended for primarily English-speaking children with little Spanish. [4]

Same clinical habit in both cases

Choose the interpretation supported by the child's actual experience. Do not use a language-exposure percentage as a diagnostic cutoff.

04 FICTIONAL TRAINING CASE

When access changes what you can observe

Case C: Valeria, age 8, uses Spanish with family, English at school and AAC in both settings. A referral says she “cannot make sentences.”

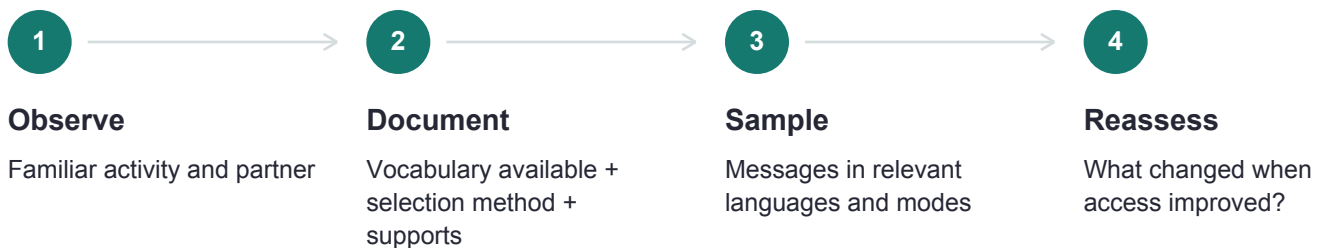
Clinician to team Show me the message Valeria wanted to communicate. Were the needed words available, and could she reach them?

Separate an observed output from a claim about language.

Clinician to family ¿Qué le gustaría a Valeria poder decir con su sistema de comunicación? ¿Cómo se lo hace saber ahora?

Identify messages that matter at home.

Test the access question



Next move: Collaborate with AAC expertise. Collect language evidence that does not require more speech or motor output than Valeria can access. Improvement after an access change informs the next question; it does not independently establish or exclude a language disorder. [1]

Brief the interpreter before the visit

Before	During	After
Explain the task, exact prompts and what to preserve	Record prompts, language changes and child responses	Review ambiguous words, dialect, support and interpretation limits

Say this in your report

“Responses were collected using [languages/modes]. [Access support] allowed [observable change]. This supports [limited conclusion]. We still need [specific evidence].” Use only wording that matches the session. [3]

Your next session on one page

Plan one real task and record the support and evidence needed next.

Child code / age / grade / languages and varieties / date

Real communication task	Current strength	Breakdown to investigate

Family example and priority

School example and language of instruction

Access supports / interpreter or bilingual collaborator / role

Method	Question it answers	Language and support	What would change the next step
Family/teacher information			
Sample or observation			
Targeted probe or learning task			
Formal tool if appropriate			

Evidence that converges / evidence that conflicts

What is supported now / what is still uncertain

Action / person responsible / date to revisit

Close the loop

Adjust blocked access and observe again. Sample both contexts when reports conflict. Persistent concerns need broader evaluation. One score or learning response cannot decide the case. [1, 2, 6]

Sources behind the decision map

This is an original planning aid. The fictional cases demonstrate reasoning, not diagnostic outcomes.

[1] American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Multilingual service delivery in audiology and speech-language pathology. Practice Portal. <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/multilingual-service-delivery/>

[2] U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). IDEA regulations, 34 CFR §300.304, evaluation procedures. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.304>

[3] American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Collaborating with interpreters, transliterators, and translators. Practice Portal. <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/collaborating-with-interpreters/>

[4] Pearson. (n.d.). Screen or assess emerging communication skills in English or Spanish with the PLS 5 family. Publisher brochure. <https://www.pearsonassessments.com/content/dam/school/global/clinical/us/assets/pls5/pls-5-brochure.pdf>

[5] Pearson. (n.d.). Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals Fourth Edition Spanish. Product information and Spanish edition comparison. <https://www.pearsonassessments.com/store/en/usd/p/100000436.html>

[6] Orellana, C. I., Wada, R., & Gillam, R. B. (2019). The use of dynamic assessment for the diagnosis of language disorders in bilingual children: A meta-analysis. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 28, 1298–1317. https://doi.org/10.1044/2019_AJSLP-18-0202

[7] U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). IDEA regulations, 34 CFR §300.306(b), determinant factors in eligibility. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.306/b>

Edition check

CELF 4 Spanish US and CELF 5 Spain have different normative populations. Match the edition to the interpretation. [5]

Sources checked 26 September 2026.