# Why Standardized Tests Cannot Be Used to Deny Services (1)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to evaluate children using a variety of assessment tools and strategies, not a single standardized test. Districts may not rely solely on standardized test scores to determine eligibility for services or to deny evidence-based interventions such as Orton-Gillingham or Wilson Reading System. Standardized assessments often fail to capture the progress of students with dyslexia, particularly in the early stages of structured literacy instruction. Schools must consider multiple data sources, including progress monitoring, teacher input, and curriculum-based measures.

## Important Legal Note

Reliance on standardized tests as the sole measure of progress or eligibility violates IDEA. Federal regulations explicitly require the use of multiple measures in evaluating student needs and progress. Ignoring other valid evidence, such as mastery checks, lesson completion, and teacher observations, denies the child a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The following cases and authorities highlight the limitations of standardized testing:

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| Authority/Case | Key Holding |
| 20 U.S.C. § 1414; 34 C.F.R. § 300.304 | Evaluations must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies; reliance on a single test is unlawful. |
| Endrew F. v. Douglas County Sch. Dist., 580 U.S. 386 (2017) | IEPs must be reasonably calculated to enable progress appropriate in light of the child’s unique circumstances—standardized scores alone are insufficient. |
| International Dyslexia Association (IDA) | Position statements confirm standardized tests often underestimate dyslexic students’ growth, particularly when progress is shown in structured literacy programs. |

# Why Standardized Tests Cannot Be Used to Deny Wilson/OG Instruction

• Timed, speed-based tests underestimate dyslexic students.

• IDEA requires multiple measures (20 U.S.C. §1414; 34 C.F.R. §300.304).

• Wilson/OG mastery checks, lesson completion, and teacher reports are valid data.

• Reliance on a single standardized test violates IDEA and ignores body-of-evidence progress.

**Takeaway for Parents:  
Schools cannot deny services or evidence-based interventions based solely on standardized test scores. IDEA requires multiple measures of data to ensure fair evaluation. If your child shows progress in structured literacy programs, that evidence must be considered even if standardized scores remain low.**