

How to Have Your Child Evaluated for Special Education Services

If you think your child may be eligible for special education services, these following steps may help you obtain the necessary evaluation:

1. Write a letter to the school principal or school psychologist requesting that your child be evaluated for special education. This letter can be typewritten or hand written, but it should be dated and signed by you. Be specific as to what you believe your child's problems are in school.
2. Make a copy of the letter to keep for your records.
3. Deliver the letter to the office at your child's school. Ask the office staff to stamp both the original and the copy of the letter received with the date noted. Or, you can mail the letter by registered mail, return receipt requested.
4. The school district has 15 days to respond to your request for an evaluation. (The 15-day timeline does not include days between the student's regular school sessions or days of vacation in excess of 5 school days.)
5. At the end of 15 days, the school district must provide you with an assessment plan or give you written notice of its decision not to assess. The assessment form is a form that lists the areas in which your child will be tested and

the possible tests that will be administered to your child. The school is not allowed to administer these tests until you authorize it to do so by signing this form. If the school refuses to assess saying that your child will not qualify anyway, it is required to put this decision in writing and give you a copy of your appeal rights.

6. If the school fails respond to you in writing within 15 days, you can:
7. Contact the school district's coordinator of special education and advise this person that your written request has been refused or ignored.
8. If your request has been ignored, file a written complaint at California Department of Education, Procedural Safeguards Referral Service, 1430 N Street, Suite 2401, Sacramento, CA 95614-5901, Fax to 916-327-3704.
9. If the school district refuses in writing to assess your child, you can initiate a mediation or hearing.
10. You can obtain an independent educational evaluation, submit it to the school, and bill the district for costs, although many districts do not pay quickly or without additional action being taken.

Once the assessment plan is signed, the district has 60 days to complete the assessment. When completed, representatives of the school and the parent will have a meeting to write up an individualized education plan ("IEP") if the student qualifies. If the student does not qualify, the parents must be advised of their rights to appeal refusal of services.