



Navigating the Special Education Process: A Step-By-Step Guide

Identifying Need for Intervention:	Based on class performance and district assessments Interventions given in class or separate instruction Interventions adapted if student doesn't improve
Making a Referral:	Team member, including family, concerns lead to referral for special education Referral based on intervention non-response or other indications Suspected disability necessary for referral
Referral Phase:	School has 25 school days to determine if a student will be evaluated after the receipt of a referral Referral is legally required to be in writing, but many teams will accept verbal referrals The district must notify parents of the decision, many teams will include parents in this decision, but that is not required
Evaluation Phase:	School has 35 school days to complete the evaluation from the date of consent Written parent consent is required for evaluation Team decides evaluation areas and must cover all suspected areas of concern



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Determining Eligibility:	<p>Team decides eligibility based on evaluation data</p> <p>Whole team including parents participates</p> <p>Process available if you disagree with all or part of results</p>
Individualized Education Plan (IEP):	<p>Eligibility is followed by creating an IEP within 30 calendar days</p> <p>Full-time public school students accept all recommended services when they consent to placement in special education at the IEP meeting</p> <p>Partially enrolled students can decline specific services</p>
Crafting the IEP:	<p>IEP meeting separate from evaluation for thoughtful decisions</p> <p>Families are valued members of IEP team and participate in crafting plan</p> <p>Students should participate in the IEP process as much as able</p> <p>A draft IEP may be shared beforehand for parent consideration</p> <p>IEP identifies service start date, often shortly after the meeting, to include ensure family input</p>
Ongoing Support:	<p>Expect evaluations every three years and annual IEP meetings</p> <p>IEP meetings may follow re-evaluation, should be clearly communicated</p> <p>Evaluations can be completed more frequently if needed</p> <p>Family can always request additional meetings for IEP; for example to consider additional evaluation, if goals are met early, or if needs change</p>