

# Special Education: EVALUATION

Before a child receives special education or related services, he or she must have an evaluation. The evaluation will help determine if a child needs special education. A parent or a member of the school staff may make the request for an evaluation. The child's parent must give consent **in writing** for the first evaluation. The evaluation will include information from parents, assessments (tests), medical concerns, and interviews with parents and school staff. The evaluation must be:

- completed by trained and knowledgeable persons;
- in all areas related to a suspected disability;
- more than just one test or assessment procedure;
- in the child's native language unless it is clearly not possible to do so;
- non-discriminatory based on race or culture.

## Some questions parents may ask school staff about evaluation:

1. Why do you want to evaluate my child?
2. What do you think you will learn from the evaluation?
3. What kinds of test will be used? What areas will be tested?
4. Will the tests discriminate against my child based on: Race? Culture? Disability? Language?
5. How do you know that the tests do not discriminate?
6. What will happen if my child is NOT evaluated? Will he or she still get help for the problems that have been identified?
7. When will I receive a written copy of the evaluation results?
8. What can I do if I do not agree with the evaluation results?

## If a child has difficulty controlling behaviors at school, these questions may also be helpful:

1. Does my child need a "functional behavioral assessment?" Why or why not? A functional assessment looks at why a child has inappropriate behaviors.
2. What positive interventions and supports are currently being used? Have they helped to improve my child's behavior? What else could we try?

## If parents disagree with the school district's evaluation results, they may:

- have someone outside the school system evaluate the child {this is called an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)};
- help select the person or persons who will do additional testing (they must meet a certain criteria);
- have the outside evaluation completed at no cost to the parent\*

*\*The school district must either have the child re-evaluated at no cost to parents, or show at a hearing that its original evaluation was appropriate.*



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# Special Education: REEVALUATION

If a child already receives special education, he or she must be re-evaluated to show if there is still a need for special education, and to address any new needs that arise. A reevaluation should not occur more than once a year, unless the parent and the school district agree that one is needed. Every child must have a reevaluation at least once every three years, unless the parent and the school district agree that it is not needed. The purpose of reevaluation is to:

- see if the child still needs special education and related services
- identify how the child is doing in school and identify any educational needs
- determine if any changes are needed in the IEP to help the child to:
  - ✓ meet the annual goals in the IEP; and
  - ✓ participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.

**Reevaluation does not necessarily mean more testing.** If a parent asks for reevaluation in writing to see if the child is making appropriate progress or needs additional services, or if it is time for the three-year reevaluation, someone from the school may set up a team meeting to meet with the parent and look at existing information. **The child's parent is a member of this team.** Generally, these are the steps:

1. Team members will review test results and other information that has been gathered on the child, including information that the parent provides to the school. This review will include observations made by teachers or other school staff, and current classroom-based assessments. The team will decide if additional information is needed to make a decision.
2. The team will consider whether additional testing is needed to determine whether the child continues to need special education and related services. The team may also consider whether accommodations or modifications are needed to help the child to meet annual IEP goals and participate in the general education curriculum.

3. School personnel will notify parents in writing of their decision, and must state the reasons for the decision.

4. If the team believes that a child needs more testing, parents must agree in writing before any new tests are given. If the parent does not agree, the school cannot test the child unless it obtains permission through mediation or other due process procedure. If state law prevents a school from reevaluating a child without written parent consent, the school must obtain permission from the parent or it will not be permitted to conduct additional assessments.

5. If the team agrees that a child no longer needs special education services, parents have a right to request that school staff conduct additional evaluation. The school must tell parents of this right.

6. Parents may consider asking the same questions at the reevaluation meeting that are recommended for the initial (first-time) evaluation (see other side of page).



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