



UK Pediatric Development Clinic

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Date:

To:

Re: (Child's name) Request for Evaluation

Dear (Director of Special Education),

My name is (name) and I am writing to you to request an evaluation for my child (child's name). S/he has recently been diagnosed with (put diagnosis) by a Developmental Pediatrician at the University of Kentucky Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic. I believe that special education programs could help with her difficulties and unique needs.

I am formally requesting that the school immediately begin the process for instituting a special education program. I understand that this process begins with the initial evaluation to determine eligibility and that you will send me an evaluation plan that explains the tests you will administer to my child. If possible, I would like to receive the plan within 10 days so that I have time to prepare for the process. Once I have given my consent for the plan, please let me know the date you set for the evaluation. I will greatly appreciate any other information you have regarding the evaluation process, including your criteria for determining eligibility and general IEP framework.

Sincerely,
(your signature)

(your name)



THE IEP PROCESS FLOWCHART

Phase 1: Recognition

Student exhibits atypical needs as compared to peers

Phase 2: Pre-referral

Student is provided interventions developed by the parents and a school-based team. Response to intervention (RTI) is tried at this point.

Successful intervention
Process stops

Interventions not successful
Move to referral

Phase 3: Referral

Student is officially referred for evaluation for special education services by an adult with intimate knowledge of the student's ability.

Phase 4: Evaluation

With consent of the parents, the student is evaluated with a variety of assessment tools and strategies. The assessments must not discriminate and should provide information to help determine the unique needs of the student

Phase 5: Eligibility

IEP team determines if the student is eligible for special education services. The student must have a disability that negatively impacts his/her educational performance and the child needs special education services to benefit from education.

No disability is noted that impacts educational performance. Special education not required. Process stops. Student referred for interventions again.

Determination that a disability impacts educational performance and eligibility is determined for special education services.

Phase 6: IEP Process (IEP and LRE)

A multidisciplinary team of parents, general and special education teachers, administrators, and others meets to develop the **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**. This document guides the special education program that will be provided for the student. The IEP team must also determine the **least restrictive environment (LRE)** and provide justification in the IEP for more restrictive placements.

Phase 7: IEP Implementation (FAPE)

The entire IEP team has the responsibility to make sure the IEP is implemented.

Phase 8: IEP Reevaluation

Each year, the IEP team is required to meet for the dual purpose of evaluating the implementation of the current IEP and to develop the next annual IEP.

REQUEST FOR ASSESSMENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

DATE: _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS: _____

PRINCIPAL'S NAME: _____

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

CURRENT GRADE: _____

I am the parent of _____, who has been having the following problems at school.

ACADEMIC PROBLEMS:

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS:

There have been modifications in the regular education program but there are concerns that there has not been a significant improvement or that the problems are getting worse.

Therefore, I wish to request an assessment of my child for possible special education services, interventions, or accommodations according to the provisions of IDEA or of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Please notify me in writing of your response and what the next steps are. Thank you for your assistance.

I can be reached by phone at _____ and the best time to reach me is at _____.

Sincerely,

Thoughts about my Child

Before you go to a meeting with the school staff, you might want to consider getting some general information together in order to be better prepared for the meeting. This is a list of questions to help you get your thoughts together. Make sure you share this information with your child's teacher and also take this information with you to the next meeting.

My child's strengths at home and at school are:

My child needs the most help with:

I want to make sure we talk about:

What are my child's needs? (This is where you can let the school staff know what your dreams for your child are in addition to the school's needs)

What supports are needed for my child to be successful at school?

What are my concerns and most important goal(s) for my child's education?

I have seen the following changes in my child since school has started or since our last meeting (educational, emotional, physical, and social):

The Special Education Process

Step-by-Step

This guide explains each step in the special education process. In each step, learn what happens, who is involved, and the timelines associated. Tips for parents are also included. While it is important to understand the process, it is just as important to communicate effectively and build relationships with school personnel. Be sure to check out the other tools included in this section on **collaboration and communication**.

Step 1: Request for Evaluation

If someone thinks your child has a disability AND needs special education or related services to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum, then a request for an evaluation will begin that process.

What happens?

- Student is referred for an individualized initial evaluation to determine whether or not there is a need for special education and related services because he/she is
 - a. not developing at the same rate or sequence as other children;
 - b. experiencing unusual or prolonged difficulties with general education curriculum and instruction; varied intervention strategies have been tried and documented before request is initiated.
- Request information is received by special education personnel
- **Notice of proposed evaluation** is given to parents
- Date the notice was sent (unless the parents agree otherwise, provide written notice to parents at least five school days prior to evaluation.)
- Description of the proposed evaluation.
- Explanation why the district proposes to conduct the evaluation.
- Description of any other options the district considered before proposing the evaluation and the reasons why those options were rejected.
- Description of each evaluation procedure, test, record or report the district used as a basis for the proposed evaluation.

- Description of any other factors that are relevant to the district's proposal to evaluate.
- A statement that the parents of a student with a disability have protection under the procedural safeguards of this part and, if this notice is not an initial referral for evaluation, the means by which a copy of the description of the PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS can be obtained.
- List sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of this part.
- If the native language or other mode of communication of the parent is not a written language, provide written evidence:
 - That the notice was translated orally or by other means to the parent in his or her native language or other mode of communication.
 - That the parent understands the content of the notice.
- Informed parental consent is required before the child is evaluated for the first time.

Who is involved?

- The request can be made by parent, teacher, counselor, principal, social worker, therapist or other individual involved in the education or care of the student.
- The parent is involved at all stages of the request.

What is the time line?

- Once the school has decided to evaluate the student AND they have received written consent, they must conduct a full individual initial evaluation within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation or,
- The timeframe does not apply if the parent of a child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation.

New in IDEA 2004

IDEA 2004 made changes in the request process for a student suspected of having a **learning disability**. Prior to the request process, the school must assure the student has been provided appropriate, high-quality, research based instruction in a regular classroom, delivered by qualified personnel. The school is not required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and

intellectual ability. The school may use a process that shows a student responds to scientific, research based interventions (usually in a general ed. Classroom), delivered by highly qualified personnel. This process is called Response to Intervention (RtI). Congress made this change in the request process because it is believed that too many students are being referred to special education when they have not been provided with adequate instruction. For more information on the Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities per IDEA 2004, visit the [U.S. Department of Education website](#).

Step 2: Notice of Rights

IDEA says the school district must give parents notice of their rights and must make sure they understand them:

• Procedural Safeguards Notice:

When a student is referred for special education services, the school district must give parents written information about their rights and options for resolving disputes.

- Rights will include information on Independent Evaluations, Parental Consent, Access to Educational Records, and Prior Written Notice.

- Options for Resolving disputes will include time lines for complaints, mediation options, placement during due process hearings, placement in alternative educational settings, private school placement, state level appeals process, civil actions and related time lines, and attorney's fees.

• Prior Written Notice

In addition to the Procedural Safeguards, the school must give specific notice, in writing, if they want to:

- Decide whether your child has a disability, or
- Change the disability category;
- Conduct an evaluation;
- Change the current IEP;
- Change the placement;
- Change how the child is provided a "free appropriate public education (FAPE); and/or

NOTE: Should the school refuse to provide an initial evaluation, they must provide a Notice of Refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or placement of the child.

This notice should be written in the native language of the parents, if feasible, and written in an easy to understand manner.

For more information on Procedural Safeguards in IDEA 2004:
<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalArea%2C12%2C>

Step 3: Evaluation

What happens?

- The student is evaluated using a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, academic and developmental information, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining:
 - whether the child meets the federal definition of a "child with a disability" and
 - the content of the child's IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum or, for preschool children, to participate in appropriate activities;

This may include:

- review of existing evaluation data;
- evaluations and information provided by the parents;
- current classroom-based assessments and observations; and
- observations by teachers and related service providers.

The child is assessed in all areas related to suspected disability, including:

- health, vision and hearing, & motor abilities
- language dominance and communicative status
- sociological and emotional status
- academic performance
- general intelligence

Results of these assessments are compiled into a report called the *EVALUATION*.

Who is involved?

- The family, student, and individuals with relevant information regarding the student.
- Qualified personnel such as an educational diagnostician or associate school psychologist, special and/or regular education teacher, speech language pathologist, and other related service personnel may be involved depending upon the suspected disability.

What is the timeline?

- The school district must conduct a full individual evaluation within 60 calendar days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation, or, within a timeline established by the state. Currently, Texas uses the timeline of 60 calendar days.
- The school shall ensure that a reevaluation is conducted if:

- the school determines that the educational or related services needs, including improved academic achievement and functional performance of the child, warrant reevaluation, or if the child's parents or teacher requests a reevaluation.
- A reevaluation shall occur:
 - not more frequently than once a year, unless the parent and school agree otherwise; and
 - at least once every 3 years, unless the parent and the school agree a reevaluation is unnecessary.

For more information on Evaluation and Reevaluation Procedures in IDEA 2004, visit the [U.S. Department of Education website](#).

Step 4 IEP Meeting

What happens?

- Prior notice of the meeting is given to the parents within a reasonable amount of time before the scheduled meeting.
- Existence of a disability, special education and related service needs are determined.
- A statement of the student's present levels of academic and functional performance including how the student's disability affects his/her involvement in and progress in the general curriculum
- Measurable annual goals for the student are developed, with documentation of the student's involvement with and progress in the general education curriculum
- Explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will NOT be participating with non-disabled children in the regular classroom, in the general curriculum, and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities
- Documentation of the student's participation in local and state-wide accountability systems.
- Dates, frequency, location, and duration of services
- For children age 16 or older, transition services which focus on how the child will make a successful transition to his or her goals for life after school are determined.
- What parents can expect to receive from the school regarding the measurement and reporting of student progress to parents on how the child is progressing towards his or her annual goals
- Placement is determined
- Consideration of special factors which include: assistive technology, behavioral interventions, Braille needs, communication needs and limited English proficiency.
- Parental consent is required before services can begin for the first time.

Who is involved?

- The parent(s)
- Student (when appropriate)
- At least one general education teacher if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment.
- At least one special education teacher, or if appropriate, special education provider
- Representative knowledgeable about the availability of resources within the local district
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluations
- Other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student, including related services personnel may be involved at the parent or school's request.

What is the timeline?

- For Initial Evaluations, an IEP is to be convened within 30 calendar days from the time the written evaluation report is completed
- An IEP must be convened within a "reasonable time."
- IEP reviews are held at least annually; more frequently, if necessary
- Parents may request an IEP review anytime

New in IDEA 2004

- An IEP committee member can be excused from all or part of the meeting if the parent and the school agree that person's attendance is not required because that person's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed.
- The parent must agree in writing to excuse a required member of the IEP Committee for any or all of the meeting.
- The IEP must end with a clear statement of the special education and related services, as well as the supplementary aids and services that must be provided to the student. IDEA 2004 adds an important new requirement that the services provided must be "based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable."
- The requirement for short term objectives was eliminated in IDEA 2004 for the majority of students receiving special education supports and services. Most IEPs are now required to only have annual goals. Typically if a student is taking an alternative assessment or test other than the TAKS, short term objectives should be completed to improve performance on the tests.
- Just because short term objectives are no longer required, it does not mean they cannot be written in if the IEP committee feels it is appropriate for that student.

Step 5: On-going Assessment and Data Collection

What happens?

- Instructional and related service personnel collect and maintain records to chart the student's progress and needs

- These records can be anecdotal reports, portfolios, charts, criterion-referenced tests, teacher made tests, interviews, student work samples, etc.

Who is involved?

- Classroom teachers
- Related service personnel (I.e. paraeducators, speech pathologists, counselors, etc.)
- Appraisal personnel
- Student
- Parents/family

What is the timeline?

- Data collection should begin as soon as the IEP is developed and continue until the next scheduled IEP review
- Usually progress is reported at the same time that typical students receive report cards, but this can change based on an IEP committee decision.

Step 6: Examine data and make recommendations for IEP goals and referrals for any additional services

What happens?

- Members of the IEP committee (usually the classroom teacher and parent) meet to examine the data that has been collected—this is sometimes called a staffing or Pre IEP meeting.
- If the student has made progress and mastered many of the IEP goals, recommendations for new goals and objectives will begin to be generated.
- If the student has not made progress or mastered IEP goals, recommendations may be made for:
 - referral for evaluation for additional services or supports
 - varied instructional strategies or materials
 - a different placement or program
- IEP committee members will now have an opportunity to explore these possibilities prior to any IEP meetings or conferences

Who is involved?

- Parents
- Student (when appropriate)
- Related service personnel, if providing services to the student
- Others involved in the education of the student (I.e., the paraeducator)

What is the time line?

- This step in the process should begin at least four to six weeks before the IEP is

due to be reviewed

For more information on IEP Process in IDEA 2004, visit the [U.S. Department of Education website](#).

IEP MEETING CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

Please review this Checklist prior to starting your IEP meeting; you may wish to send a copy to your team prior to the meeting so they can use it to prepare. As you go through your IEP meeting, check to make sure that each of the issues below is addressed by your team. If it is not addressed, please ask your team to discuss it. Please let the Director of Special Education know if your IEP meeting does not address each of the issues below.

I received a copy of the meeting notice, in my language, in sufficient time to allow me to prepare for the meeting, and the meeting is being held at a convenient time and place for me.

I received a copy of evaluations and other reports, in my language, 10 days in advance of the meeting.

My meeting is with a complete IEP team, including my child's general education teacher, my child's Case manager from the Child Study Team, a special education provider or supervisor, someone who can interpret the evaluation results, and a district representative who has the authority to make commitments for services for my child. If a member of the team is not present, I gave informed written consent for their absence in advance of the meeting and any information they would have provided at the meeting was given to me in advance.

At my IEP meeting, we talked about the following issues in the following order:

My child's "present levels of academic and functional performance" (how my child is doing in school and home, the results of the most recent evaluations and testing, any information I provided, etc.)

Measurable annual goals & objectives for my child that are tied to the general education curriculum (at least one set of goals & objectives for each of my child's needs).

Special education & related services that my child needs, including:

Whether my child needs "supplementary aids and services," either directly for her, or for the teacher, or for other children in the class, to help support my child's successful inclusion in the class.

Any special skills, knowledge, or professional development needed by my child's teacher, Aide/paraprofessional, related services provider, etc.

Any assistance and parent training I need to develop my ability to help my child receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, and to progress, such as (if appropriate):

Communication: Hands-on instruction and communication tools (PECS, signs, topic boards, picture schedules) to learn effective strategies to decrease my child's frustrations associated with limited receptive/expressive language skills and to facilitate increased communication between me and my child;

Occupational therapy: Hands on instruction and modeling of specific fine motor, gross motor, and sensory based activities so that I/we can work at home to enhance my child's independence;

Physical therapy: Strategies I/we can use at home to help my child increase balance, coordination, and muscle strength;

Positive behavior supports: Effective teaching methods and positive behavior intervention strategies for us to use in our home so that we can provide cohesive instruction, address difficult behaviors, and address generalization of all acquired skills.

Whether or not my child needs related services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychiatric or psychological services, transportation, travel training, orientation or mobility training, or other related services.