

Important Steps To Take If You Believe Your Child Has Special Education Needs

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Special Education is governed by Federal and State law which requires public schools to provide children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education that is individually tailored to meet their unique needs, along with sufficient support services to permit that child to benefit educationally from that instruction.

If your child is struggling in school and/or you believe your child has special education needs, you should contact your public school district with a written request for a referral to the district's Child Study Team. A referral can also be made to the school district by a teacher who is concerned that your child may have some special education needs.

A meeting will then be scheduled to discuss the request. If a meeting is not offered, you should demand one. At this meeting, you will discuss the types of evaluations which may be conducted. Make sure your child is evaluated in all of the areas where a disability is suspected. These evaluations are the only way for the school district to determine whether or not your child is eligible for special education and/or related services and to determine the specific services required.

After the evaluations are conducted, another meeting will be scheduled for you with the Child Study Team to discuss the results and whether your child is eligible for special education and/or related services. Additional evaluations may be ordered if required. If the district doesn't agree that additional evaluations are required, you have the right to obtain them at your expense.

If it is determined that your child is eligible for services, an [Individualized Educational Program](#) (IEP) will be developed and reviewed on an annual basis and implemented to ensure your child receives the special education services and/or related services he or she needs. Your input in developing your child's

IEP and in the annual review of your child's IEP is critical. Each IEP must be reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of that child's circumstances.

If your school district declines to conduct an evaluation or you do not agree with the Child Study Team's determination, you have legal recourse with respect to identification, evaluation, eligibility, program development and placement. You should consult with a special education attorney to protect your child's rights to obtain the special education services and resources he or she needs.