



Requesting a Special Education Assessment: Step-by-Step Guide

Why might your child need a special education assessment?

Special education assessments can help determine whether a child has an education disability and whether they are in need of special education services. Through special education your child may be eligible to receive an Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) that is specifically designed to meet their unique needs based on their disability.

What does a child with an educational disability look like?

- Poor grades
- Poor attendance
- Low test scores
- Problems with memory, concentration or attention
- Behavior problems
- Social or emotional problems
- Speech and language problems

What is an Individualized Education Program (“IEP”)?

An IEP is a written education program developed by the school district, teachers, and the education rights holder (“ERH”). IEPs include how the child is currently doing in school, and what everyone involved will do for the next school year to improve the child’s education outcomes.

Procedures for Requesting a Special Education Assessment:

- Step 1. Complete the form:** Fill out the form ([download Word Doc](#)). Include what your concerns are in the areas of academics and/or behavior. Also include why you suspect your child has a disability and/or any diagnosed disabilities they already have (e.g. ADHD or depression). Make sure to sign and date the form.
- Step 2. Submit the form:** Turn in the attached form to the principal or special education coordinator at your child’s school.
- Step 3. Get proof:** You should get proof that the school received your request, in case you later have any difficulties getting a response from the school. There are 3 possible ways to get proof that you submitted the special education assessment request.
 - a) If submitting the form in person, get a date stamp on the form and keep a copy as proof.
 - b) If submitting via fax, keep a copy of the fax transmittal report confirming that the fax was received.
 - c) If sending via mail, send it via certified mail. Make sure to keep the certified mail receipt as proof.
- Step 4. Get the School’s Response:** Your child’s school is legally required to send you a written response within 15 calendar days of receiving the request for an assessment. Your child’s school only has two options to respond to your request. They can send you an assessment plan granting the assessment **OR** a written refusal to complete the assessment. **DO NOT** accept other options. Do not agree to a parent-teacher conference or a Student Study Team (SST) meeting instead of the assessment you requested.
- Step 5. Review and Sign the Assessment Plan:** After you receive the assessment plan from the school, you have 15 calendar days to sign it and return it. Before returning it to the school, review the assessment plan to make sure they are doing all necessary assessments (i.e. cognition, academics, motor/processing, social/emotional/behavioral/attention). Request in writing, on the assessment plan, to receive a copy of the assessment report(s) 5 business days before the IEP meeting.
- Step 6. Holding the IEP Meeting:** After you return the signed assessment plan to your child’s school, the school legally has only 60 calendar days to hold an Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) meeting to discuss the results of the assessments and whether your child is eligible for special education. Make sure to read your child’s assessment report prior to the meeting and prepare any questions you may want to ask at the meeting. If you don’t agree with the school’s determination of IEP eligibility or the services/supports they offer, don’t sign the IEP document. Ask your school for a list of attorneys/advocates who can help you appeal their decision.

[Download instructions in Spanish \(PDF\)](#) | [Download sample letter in Spanish \(Word Doc\)](#)

Date: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

Child's Name: _____

Child's Date of Birth: _____

Dear Principal/Special Education Coordinator:

I am currently requesting a comprehensive psycho-educational assessment for _____
Child's Name

who is in the _____ at _____. My child lives within the boundaries of the
Grade Name of School

_____ School District. This assessment is needed at this time because my
Name of the School District

child has the following needs:

Academic Needs: _____

Behavior Needs: _____

Accordingly, please forward a proposed assessment plan to me within fifteen (15) calendar days. Educ. Code §§ 56043(a) and 56321(a). If you have any further questions regarding this correspondence, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Education Rights Holder