

How to Get Services

You are worried that your child (age 2 years 9 months - 20 years) is not keeping up with their peers. Perhaps your doctor has recommended that you look into services at school.

In order for your child to receive any special support services from the school district, your child must be evaluated. It does not matter if you have an outside evaluation saying your child has difficulties. The school district must do its own evaluation. To get an evaluation, someone must request the evaluation. A request for an evaluation is called a "referral" in education lingo.

Anyone can make a "referral for evaluation", including you or another person involved in the education or care of your child. However, it is up to the parent or guardian to consent to the evaluation. It is best if you make the request, or referral.

A request for evaluation must be in writing. Address the letter to the principal of your child's school and the special education director of the school district. (For a copy of a sample letter – see the [IDEA](#) manual pg. 32). If you don't know who this person is, ask your child's teacher.

If your child is not in school yet, contact your school district or local [education service center](#) to find out where your home school is. Then call the school to obtain the name of the Special Education contact and the Principal. Send the written referral addressed to these people.

Once your request is received by the school, the school has 15 school days to:

- Get your written consent for the evaluation to begin, or
- If they choose to recommend a screening, consider [response to intervention](#), or refuse to evaluate, they must provide you with your [Procedural Safeguards](#) and explain your rights.

If the school decides not to evaluate, the school must inform you **in writing** of the school's refusal. This is called [prior written notice](#). Parents must also be informed in writing when/if the school decides to do a screening instead of an evaluation.

If the school decides not to evaluate your child and you do not agree with that decision, you have due process rights. Filing a complaint with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or requesting mediation are some of those rights. For information on your options, please see "[Dispute Resolution](#)"

What parents need to remember:

- Always keep copies of ALL written documents for your records.
- Anyone can make a referral for evaluation.
- You should be part of the Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) as part of an initial evaluation or any future evaluation.
- You have the right to ask what examinations or tests will be used and how they will be used to develop the individualized education program (IEP).
- The school must send you a written notice when they recommend OR decline a Full Initial and Individual Evaluation (FIE) or suggest a screening instead of a FIE.
- The school must have your written consent before completing any evaluation.
- You have due process rights in every step of the special education process.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Texas Education Agency - [Timeline](#)

SpedTex - [Requesting Special Education Testing](#) (video)

Legal Framework for the Child Centered Process:

- [Child Find Duty](#)
- [Child Find for Parentally Placed Private School Children](#)
- [Referral for Services](#)

Disability Rights Texas – [How to Request an Initial Evaluation for Special Education Eligibility](#)

Center for Parent Information and Resources – [Evaluating Children for Disability](#)

Evaluation

[Evaluation Procedures](#) – From the TARGET Manual by the Texas Statewide Leadership for Autism – While the information provided is specific in relation to students with autism, ANY parent can use the information to learn about the variety of assessments available

Learning Disabilities Association of America – [Right to an Evaluation for Special Education Services](#)

