

Requesting Evaluations

For school-aged children



What is a Special Education Evaluation?

A special education evaluation is an assessment used to determine eligibility for special education services and/or to give information about a student's current skill level in an area.

Special education evaluations can be in any area that impacts a child in the school environment. Some examples include academic, psychological, learning, socio-emotional, speech/communication, and motor skills. School staff will use different types of assessments and information gathering strategies to understand the child's needs and strengths.



What are some examples of when to consider requesting a Special Education Evaluation?

- If your child receives a new diagnosis that may impact them at school
- If your child is suspected of having a disability
- If your child is struggling at school in some way; for example: academically, communication-wise, behavior-wise, or socially
- If your child already has an IEP and their skills have changed significantly

What are the steps of requesting a Special Education Evaluation?

Step 1: Identify Concerns



List your specific concerns, such as reading difficulties, social challenges, speech delays, etc. Potential areas of assessments include: Cognition & Learning, Speech & Language, Behavior & Social-Emotional Skills, and/or Motor Skills & Sensory Processing.

Step 2: Submit a Written Request



Parents/guardians can start the process by emailing the principal to request a meeting to discuss evaluations for special education. Your request **must be in writing** and may be sent to the school principal and/or special education coordinator, or district special education office. **What to include in your e-mail:**

- **Your child's name and grade**
- **A clear request** for an evaluation
- **Concerns** about your child's learning or development
- **Any relevant diagnoses** (if applicable)
- **Your contact information**
- **Any limitations you have regarding scheduling**

Step 3: School's Response



- School will send a meeting notice at least 10 days before the meeting.
- Parents are encouraged to share all of their concerns at the meeting. The school staff will identify which evaluations, if any, are appropriate to look into.



- The school may:
 - **Agree** and begin the evaluation process. Once parental consent is obtained, evaluations must be completed within 60 days for initial eligibility or 90 days for reevaluations.
 - **Refuse** and document why on the Prior Written Notice (PWN) which you will receive 5 days after the meeting. The PWN summarizes the decisions made in the meeting. If school refuses to evaluate, you may dispute this decision.

Step 4: The Evaluation Process



If evaluations are conducted, parents may be asked to complete surveys, check lists or other paperwork. The school will look at:

- existing data and classroom, statewide, and district assessments
- assessment results from special education teachers, psychologists, speech or occupational therapists, and other specialists
- information from you, the parent/guardian(s)
- classroom observations



Step 5: Review of Results & Next Steps



- Parents/guardians are supposed to receive a copy of all assessment results and any documents that will be discussed at least 5 days before the meeting.
- After the evaluation, a **team meeting** of staff and parents/guardians will discuss results.
- If eligible, an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** will be developed.
- If not eligible, parents can:
 - Request an **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)** at the school's expense.
 - Explore **Section 504 accommodations** if an IEP isn't needed.

Related resources:

- [Sample letter to request an initial evaluation](#)
- [Everything About Evaluations](#)

Sources

- Center for Parent Information and Resources, YOUR CHILD'S EVALUATION: [Your Child's Evaluation](#)
- Maryland State Department of Education, PARENT INFORMATION SERIES: Special Education Services in Maryland: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS: [Special Education Process \(marylandpublicschools.org\)](#)
- Maryland State Department of Education, PARENT INFORMATION SERIES: Special Education Services in Maryland: PARENTAL RIGHTS: [Parental Rights Maryland Procedural Safeguards Notice \(marylandpublicschools.org\)](#)