

## Special Education Process Checklist for Parents

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004) defines “children with disabilities” as individuals between the ages of 3 and 21 who have one or more of the following categories:

- Autism
- Intellectual disability (ID)
- Speech or language impairment
- Emotional disturbance (ED)
- Other health impairment (OHI)
- Deafness
- Multiple disabilities (MD)
- Hearing impairment (HI)
- Visual impairment (VI)
- Orthopedic impairment (OI)
- Traumatic brain injury
- Specific learning disability (SLD)
- Deaf-blindness (D/B)
- Developmental delay (preschool)

For a child **to qualify** for special education, he/she must have a **disability that meets the criteria** of one of these categories **and** there must be evidence that the disability **adversely affects his/her educational performance**.

Parents (You), school personnel, or others may make a request to the school district of residence for your child to be evaluated to determine whether your child qualifies for special education. The district will review all available information, including input from you, to determine if there is a suspected disability. If there is no evidence of a disability, the district can deny the request. The district has **30 days** from the date of referral to determine if your child will be evaluated.

### ☐ Step 1 Suspected Disability/Evaluation Planning Meeting

The school district will invite you to participate in the suspected disability/evaluation planning meeting. If your child is determined to have a suspected disability, the Evaluation Planning Form is completed which documents the area(s) of suspected disability, the current data and information, and the proposed assessments based on your child’s individual needs. The evaluation isn’t one assessment or test, and multiple people (a team) will be completing the evaluation. Your child will be evaluated/assessed in all areas (developmental, academic, and functional) related to the suspected disability. The evaluation may include:

- intelligence testing to assess cognitive ability and help identify your child’s specific strengths and weaknesses in learning
- achievement and academic testing to assess specific educational skills and areas
- exams for vision and hearing
- data from interventions
- speech/language evaluations
- large/gross motor evaluations
- fine motor/occupational evaluations
- social emotional assessments
- behavior assessments
- observations of your child

You must sign consent before the evaluation/assessments can begin. If you refuse consent, your child will not be evaluated. Once consent is given, the district will have **60 days** to complete the evaluation. During the evaluation you may be asked to provide information (such as medical reports, developmental history) or complete questionnaires about your child.

## ❑ Step 2 Evaluation Team Report (ETR) Meeting

After the evaluation is completed, you will be invited to a meeting to review the Evaluation Team Report (ETR). This report includes all of your child's assessment results and a description of his/her educational needs. The results of the evaluation are used to determine your child's eligibility for special education (if there is a disability that meets one of the criteria and evidence that the disability adversely affects educational performance) and make decisions about an appropriate educational program. If your child is not eligible, the team may determine other interventions, accommodations, or supports your child needs. You have the right to disagree with the results of the evaluation or the eligibility decision. Refer to the guide to parent rights\*.

## ❑ Step 3 Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

If your child is determined eligible for special education by the evaluation team, the district has **30 days** to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child. The IEP is the plan for your child's special education program and contains information about his/her strengths and weaknesses, educational goals and objectives, and the supports and services needed to achieve the goals. You are a member of your child's IEP team and will be invited to the meeting to write the IEP. If you agree with the IEP, you will sign consent giving the school district permission to provide the program and services for your child. You will receive reports of your child's progress on their goals as written in the IEP. If you disagree with the IEP or refuse consent, refer to the guide to parent rights\*.

## ❑ Step 4 Annual IEP Meeting

Your child's IEP is reviewed annually to discuss progress, develop new goals and objectives, and determine services and supports. The IEP can be reviewed or amended sooner if needed. You are a member of your child's IEP team and will be invited to the meeting. You can agree or disagree with the proposed changes. If you disagree with any changes in the IEP, your child will continue to receive the services listed in the previous IEP until an agreement is reached. If the disagreement continues, refer to the guide to parent rights\*.

## ❑ Step 5 Reevaluation for Eligibility

A reevaluation to determine whether your child continues to be eligible for special education is completed at least every three years (or sooner if there is a need). This restarts the special education process at step 2 with an Evaluation Planning Meeting.

\* "A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education: Special Education Procedural Safeguards Notice" from the Ohio Department of Education ([education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov))

**Provided by the Ohio Valley Educational Service Center (OVESC) Parent Mentor Program  
Cambridge, OH 740-439-3558**

Parent mentors provide information, resources and support to families of children with disabilities and their school districts. All mentor services are free of charge for families.