



Evaluations: How Does a Child Get Special Education Services?

Before a child can get special education services, the school must do a full evaluation.

This evaluation helps the school learn:

1. If the child has a disability
2. What help and services the child needs in school

The evaluation is done by trained school staff, such as a school psychologist or educational diagnostician.

A good evaluation helps the IEP team make the best plan for the child.

Important Things to Know About Evaluations.

1. The school must gather information from many places.

The evaluator should look at:

- Parent information
- Teacher reports
- Classroom observations
- Work samples
- More than one test

One test alone is not enough to understand a child's needs.

Parents can also share reports from doctors or outside evaluators.

2. Children should be tested in their main language.



If a child speaks another language, like Navajo, the testing should be done in that language when possible. A child cannot be found to have a disability just because they are learning English or come from a different culture.

3. The school must test all areas where the child may need help.

This may include:

- Learning
- Speech and communication
- Behavior and emotions
- Vision or hearing
- Movement and motor skills
- Health

If the school sees concerns in more than one area, all areas should be checked.

4. Non-verbal children must get the right tests.

If a child does not speak, the evaluator must use tests made for non-verbal children. The tests should show what the child can learn and do.

5. The evaluation should find all services the child may need.

Some children may need extra help, like:

- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy

The school must look at all possible needs, even if they are not common for the child's disability.



What Happens After Testing?

After testing, the evaluator writes a report.

The report may include:

- Family and school background
- Tests that were used
- Test scores and results
- Strengths and needs
- Recommendations for services

You can ask the evaluator to meet with you and explain the report.

Who Decides if a Child Gets Special Education?

The evaluator does not decide alone. A team called the Eligibility Determination Team makes the decision. This team includes:

- Parents
- Teachers
- School staff
- Specialists

The team decides if:

- The child has a disability, and
- The child needs special education services



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