



Reevaluation

As children grow and develop their needs change. For students with IEPs (Individualized Education Plans), those changing needs have to be recognized and reflected in the educational planning process. That means periodic reevaluations for special education services are necessary to determine if a student continues to be an eligible child with a disability as defined by IDEA (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and, if so, to help gather the most current information about the student's needs and abilities to be used for the development of an appropriate IEP.

When a child has an IEP, the federal law requires IEP teams to consider reevaluating the student at least every 3 years. Parents can also request that their child be reevaluated up to once per year. This is most often helpful when there are new issues coming up at school related to the disability or the child has received a new diagnosis that may impact him or her at school.

Parents can look towards the middle on the cover page of the IEP for the date when the next 3 year reevaluation is due for their child. There is no definite time frame that is required for a reevaluation to be completed but all IDEA evaluation should be completed within a reasonable time.

The purpose of a reevaluation is to gather information for the team IEP team to determine if the child still qualifies for the IEP and, if the child has any additional needs that should be addressed with goals and services in the IEP.

When an evaluation takes place, the student must be assessed in all areas of disability. If parents have specific concerns about their child's disability related needs at school or would like the team to get some data to consider adding a new goal or service, we suggest that parents consider putting that request in writing.

The evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related service needs. Parents are vital members of the IEP

team and as such are included in the process of determining what kind of information the evaluation needs to provide. Any reasonable concern parents raise should be discussed by the IEP team and included in planning the evaluation process.

Educational evaluations can be much broader than academic areas, and if your child's disability indicates it, should include data or testing to address behavioral, social, communication, assistive technology, or other identified or suspected needs. The IEP team should review existing data first and consider whether additional testing or observations are necessary. Once that determination is made, educational professionals then have the responsibility for choosing the best methods and instruments to gather that information about the student. It is perfectly acceptable for a parent to request that an evaluation measure a particular aspect of your child's abilities, for example, reading comprehension, but it is the role of the educators on the team to determine what particular testing instrument or body of testing is needed to accomplish that.

Parent consent is required for any evaluations to be done. The only exception to parental involvement and consent in the evaluation process is if the school and Area Education Agency (AEA) can demonstrate that they took reasonable steps to involve the parents and obtain their consent but the parents failed to respond to their efforts.

If there is a question about whether a student currently receiving special education services continues to be an eligible "child with a disability" under the IDEA definition, the student must be evaluated before special education services can be ended. Again, parents would be part of the determination and must be fully informed and receive their written notice of any decision to "exit" their child from special education—that is, to end special education and related services that have been provided to the child under an IEP.



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An evaluation is not required before a student exits special education under two particular circumstances:

- No evaluation is required before a special education student graduates from a secondary (high) school with a regular diploma, and
- No evaluation is required when a student “ages out” of special education by exceeding the age eligibility under State law (age 21 in Iowa).

IDEA evaluations are specifically conducted for the purposes of determining continuing eligibility and identifying appropriate services, both of which cease to apply with graduation or aging out of special education entitlement.

Keep in mind, if you have concerns about your child’s education that you think a new evaluation data might identify you should raise those concerns before your child nears graduation or age 21. If additional evaluation data is needed as part of the transition planning process, it should be gathered early enough for the information to be incorporated into the student’s IEP. Evaluation data gathered during the final years of high school may coincidentally prove useful to post-secondary educators, but the IDEA does not require schools and AEAs to conduct student evaluations specifically for post-secondary purposes.

A new evaluation is beneficial if new information is needed that can be used to improve your child’s educational program. Parents should work with the other members of the IEP team to focus on what is needed to accomplish that. While having comprehensive evaluation data that gives an accurate picture of your child’s needs and abilities is important, that doesn’t necessarily mean it all has to be gathered at the same time. Repeating testing frequently to gather data that is still valid is a waste of resources and may be frustrating to your child as well.

Think of each test or bit of evaluation data as a piece in a jigsaw puzzle that, when complete, forms a clear and comprehensive picture of your child’s strengths and needs. When considering a reevaluation request, review the pieces you already have in place and focus your request on any gaps that are remaining.

Related Resources

Look for the following information sheets on www.askresource.org/resources

- Special Education Evaluations
- Progress Monitoring

ASK Essential Questions

- What evaluations are needed for the IEP team to write an appropriate IEP for my child?
- Could I get a copy of any new evaluation information that has been collected to review before the next IEP meeting?
- Are there any new skill areas that may be getting in my child’s way at school and could be evaluated for possible goals or services on the IEP?
- How does the reevaluation information compare to any outside evaluation information that I have?