

As children grow and develop their needs change. For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), those needs must be identified and reflected in the IEP.

### What is the purpose of a re-evaluation?

Periodic re-evaluations for special education services are necessary to:

- determine if a student continues to be an eligible individual with a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) 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.

### How often is a re-evaluation completed?

When an individual has an IEP, the federal law requires IEP teams to re-evaluate the student at least every three years. An individual's re-evaluation due date can be found on the first page of the current IEP.

A re-evaluation may be required sooner than every three years under any of the following circumstances:

- a parent or teacher requests a re-evaluation,
- the IEP team determines a re-evaluation is necessary to address educational or related service needs,
- the IEP team is proposing to exit the individual from special education, or
- a student moves from out of state and additional information is necessary to determine eligibility for special education and/or develop an IEP.

A parent may request a re-evaluation up to one time per year. Possible reasons that parents may consider a request include:

- when a student is not making the progress that is expected,
- there are new concerns at school related to the disability, or
- the child has received a new diagnosis that may impact his or her education.

### What should the re-evaluation process look like?

Prior to the re-evaluation date for a student, the educators and AEA team members should contact parents to have a discussion about the upcoming re-evaluation. This may be a phone conversation or a meeting.

Parents are vital members of the IEP team and should be included in the process of determining what information the re-evaluation needs to include. The team should review existing data first and consider if additional testing or observations are necessary. Any concerns brought by the parents should also be discussed and included in planning for the re-evaluation process.

Following a conversation or meeting about the re-evaluation for the student, parents can expect to receive documentation titled Consent for and Prior Written Notice of Re-evaluation for Special Education with information indicating if the IEP team is:

- a. recommending additional assessments including which areas (or performance domains) they will be assessing, or
- b. not recommending additional assessments.

Parents can disagree with the proposal stated in the Prior Written Notice and consider their options for conflict resolution in the Procedural Safeguards Manual.

If the team recommended additional assessments, a parent will need to sign consent in order for the educators and AEA to move forward with the recommended assessments for the re-evaluation.

Once the re-evaluation is completed, the results will be documented in a Re-evaluation Report. The IEP team will then meet to go over these results and consider the need for any changes to the IEP.

### **What additional things should parents know about re-evaluation for special education?**

- A re-evaluation must be comprehensive, to identify all of the child’s special education and related service needs. This could include concerns related to the areas of academics, social emotional behavior, adaptive behavior, physical, communication, assistive technology, or other identified or suspected needs.
- If parents have specific concerns about their child’s progress at school or would like the team to collect data to consider adding a new goal or service, parents should consider putting that request in writing.
- There is no time frame that is required in the law for a re-evaluation to be completed but all IDEA evaluations should be completed within a reasonable time frame.
- Parents can request a copy of the Re-evaluation Report before the meeting so that they have a chance to review the information ahead of time and think of any questions that they may have.
- If parents disagree with the results of the re-evaluation they can request an Independent Educational Evaluation, sometimes referred to as a second opinion.

### **Can the IEP team decide to “exit” my child from special education services without parent participation and completing a re-evaluation?**

No, a student must be re-evaluated before special education services can end. Parents should be part of the IEP team who makes that determination. They must be fully informed and receive Prior Written Notice of any decision to “exit” their child from special education (to end special education and related services that have been provided to the child under an IEP).

A re-evaluation is not required before a student exits special education under two particular circumstances:

1. When a special education student graduates with a diploma, or
2. When a student “ages out” of special education by exceeding the age eligibility under state law (age 21 in Iowa).

Re-evaluations under IDEA are specifically conducted for the purpose of determining continuing eligibility and identifying appropriate services. Neither of these are applicable upon graduation or aging out of special education eligibility.

### **Related Resources**

- A Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation
- Independent Educational Evaluations
- Sample Letter Requesting a Re-evaluation
- What Can I Do If I Disagree with the IEP Team?  
*Conflict Resolution Options in Special Education*

### **ASK Essential Questions**

- Is there any new information or areas of concern that could be evaluated for possible goals or services in the IEP?
- Have I requested a copy of the Re-evaluation Report to review before the IEP meeting?
- How does the re-evaluation information compare to any outside evaluation information that I have?