

Prior Written Notice (PWN) is a procedural safeguard under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is one of the protections that parents are entitled to. Parents have the right to receive prior written notice (PWN) whenever the school wants to (or refuses to):

- evaluate their child,
- change their child's disability identification,
- change their child's educational placement, or
- change the way in which their child is provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

The school should automatically provide parents with prior written notice in any of these events. Parents may also ask for written notice if the school tells them about changes to the IEP they plan to make through a phone call, a meeting, an email or a conversation.

It is best for parents to put the request in writing (and keep a copy for their records). Below is an example letter requesting written notice. It is important that parents fill in the blanks with details about the situation. Parents are welcome to use part or all of the sample letter below.

Date (month, day and year)

Your name, address and daytime telephone number

Dear (School Staff Person's name),

At our meeting (or) during our conversation on (date), we discussed my child's (evaluation, eligibility, placement, IEP, services, etc.). I requested (_____). . . and was denied (or) I was told the school intends to (_____). . . but I have not received any information about this decision in writing. In line with the IDEA regulations, I am requesting prior written notice regarding (be specific about what you want the school to explain or answer.)

According to the IDEA, at 34 CRF §300.503, prior written notice must include all of the following:

- A description of what the school is proposing or refusing to do;
- An explanation of why the school proposes or refuses this action;
- A description of any other options the school considered and the reasons why those options were rejected;
- A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the school used as a basis for this decision;
- A description of any other relevant factors that went into this decision;
- Information on how I can obtain a copy of procedural safeguards and an explanation available to me, and
- Information on sources I can contact for help in understanding IDEA's regulations.

I look forward to receiving a detailed response to my request as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Your name