



Special Education is guided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Indiana Article 7. Every special education journey begins with an evaluation. This resource supports families in understanding the process.

## What is an educational evaluation? 511 IAC 7-40-3

“Educational evaluation” means the process used to provide information about a student’s disability or suspected disability to determine the following: (1) Whether a student is eligible for special education and related services, and (2) If eligible, the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the student needs.

- An educational evaluation can be requested by either the parent or the school. Once parental consent is received, the school has 50 instructional days to complete the evaluation and hold the case conference (CC). In some specific circumstances this timeline may not apply, such as when an expedited evaluation is required due to discipline.
- The educational evaluation is conducted by a team which includes various individuals such as a school psychologist, general education teacher, special education teacher, speech-language pathologist, and more.
- Parents may submit external evaluations, medical records, and other information for consideration.
- Parents have the right to request a copy of the initial educational evaluation report at no cost prior to the initial evaluation CC. The parent can also request a meeting with a qualified individual to explain the results of the educational evaluation prior to the initial CC. This meeting should be within five school days prior to the initial CC.

## How can a parent request an initial educational evaluation? 511 IAC 7-40-4

If a parent wishes to request an initial educational evaluation for their student, they may make the request verbally or in writing and the request must be made to one of the following licensed personnel, employed by the school:

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|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| ➤ Teachers          | ➤ School psychologists  | ➤ Building principals  |
| ➤ School counselors | ➤ School social workers | ➤ Other administrators |

After a parent makes the request, the school has ten (10) instructional days to provide the parent with a written response.

## What happens during the educational evaluation?

Evaluation processes may look different depending on the suspected area of disability. Evaluators seek to determine if the child needs special education services and/or related services (e.g. speech therapy, physical therapy). Evaluations may include:

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|--|--|
| ➤ Variety of assessments                   | ➤ Observations outside or inside of the classroom  |
| ➤ Vision and hearing screenings            | ➤ Meetings with professionals, (e.g. nurses, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, and behavior interventionists) |
| ➤ Questionnaires about the child’s history |  |

### Did you know?

Indiana has a parent training and information center, IN\*SOURCE, to help families along every step of their special education journey. Visit [insource.org](https://insource.org) to learn more about their services.



# EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION FOR FAMILIES: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What happens if the school refuses the parent's request for an educational evaluation?

The school has ten (10) instructional days to provide the parent with written notice either proposing or refusing to conduct the educational evaluation. If the school refuses the parent's request for an initial educational evaluation, the parent may challenge the public agency's refusal to conduct an initial evaluation by requesting mediation or a due process hearing. The school must provide the parent with an explanation of the parent's rights to contest the evaluation decision in the provided written notice.

## What happens if a family disagrees with the evaluation that the school completes?

If you disagree with the findings of the educational evaluation, you have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation at no cost to you and is at public expense once per school year. "Independent Educational Evaluation" means an evaluation that is conducted by a qualified evaluator who is not employed by the school that is responsible for the student in question. The results of the Independent Educational Evaluation must be taken into account when determining eligibility for special education services.

## What can the family do if they still disagree, or if they feel like services do not meet the needs of the child?

At any time, if a family does not believe that the school is following the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Indiana Article 7, or is not meeting the needs of the child, they may access Indiana's [Dispute Resolution](#) services. Families may also contact the state's Parent Training and Information Center, [IN\\*SOURCE](#), or a [Facilitated IEP](#) process for further support.

## What happens after the educational evaluation?

After the evaluation, an eligibility conference will be held with a multidisciplinary team. Alongside the teachers, leaders, and professionals, the parent (and child, if appropriate) will determine if the child needs special education services. If they do, they may also determine if the child needs related services (e.g. speech therapy, physical therapy, transportation). After this, an IEP can be created to develop an individualized program for the child. Learn more about Specially Designed Instruction [here](#) and learn more about related services [here](#).

## How long are evaluations in effect?

While the IEP can be revised at any time at the request of the school or the parent, and is reviewed at least annually, a re-evaluation will be considered every three years. In addition to adjusting services for the child, this re-evaluation helps to determine if the child is still in need of special education and related services. The school will ask for consent to re-evaluate, but may proceed if reasonable attempts have been made to contact the family.

## What happens if my family moves?

If a student enrolls in a new school district before an in-progress evaluation is completed, the new school must make sufficient progress to ensure prompt completion of the evaluation. Also, the parent and new school should agree on a specific time when the evaluation will be completed. If a student is receiving special education services, moves, and newly enrolls in a new school district in the state within the same school year, the school must immediately provide services comparable to the student's previous IEP until they adopt the previous IEP or they develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP. If the student moves from out of state, the new school is also required to provide comparable services until they develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP, but they may also conduct an educational evaluation if the new school determines it is necessary. The new school must convene the case conference committee within 10 instructional days of the child's enrollment date. As in every conference, the parent is a valuable member of this decision-making process.