

The Basics of Special Education

10 Steps in the Special Education Process

1. Referral- Child is identified as possibly needing special education and related services. Contact Project Find at 1-800-252-0052 for your local coordinator. **Within 10 calendar days after referral**, the school must inform parent of the referral and request written consent to evaluate the student.

2. Evaluation- Child is evaluated by the IEP team to gather information to understand the educational needs of the child and to guide decision making on services for the child. **"The time from referral or from receipt of parental consent to an initial evaluation to the completion of the individualized education program or the determination of ineligibility shall not be more than 30 school days."** R 340.1721c

3. Eligibility is decided- IEP team, including parents, determine if child is eligible for special education using all available information about the child.

4. Child is found eligible for services- Child will either be found eligible for special education services and move to steps 5-10. If not eligible, see next page.

5. IEP Meeting is scheduled- **An IEP meeting must be held within 30 calendar days after it is determined that the child qualifies for special education.** Involve parents in process.

6. IEP meeting is held and IEP is written- Entire IEP team writes the IEP together, using collected child data. IEP determines any and all services the child is to receive.

7. Services are provided- Services must begin as soon as possible after IEP development. All service providers and parents must have access to the IEP.

8. Progress is measured and reported to parents- The IEP will specify how the child's progress will be measured. Reports are shared with parents. The IEP is reviewed yearly.

9. IEP is reviewed- **IEP is reviewed at least once per year.** Document is revised to address any lack of expected progress. Either the school or parents can request a review.

10. Child is reevaluated- **Must occur at least every three years.** Occurs to establish continued eligibility and child's recent educational needs.

If child is not found eligible for Special Education...

- Parents must receive a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of that determination.
- Under the IDEA, parents must also be given information about what they can do if they disagree with the eligibility decision.
 - IDEA gives parents the right to request mediation or a due process hearing to resolve a dispute about the child's identification, evaluation, or education placement.
 - Parents also have a right to obtain an independent educational evaluation (IEE).
- A child who has a disability but who is not eligible under IDEA may be eligible for the protections afforded by other laws. It's not uncommon for a child to have a 504 plan at school to address disability-related educational needs, instead of an IEP.
- Teachers and parents will need to work together to design interventions for the child to use in the classroom that will ensure continued success.
- While child may not have qualified for special education services, it is imperative to continuously monitor the child for developmental changes. As the child grows, the child may become eligible for services. Ongoing assessment will give more information regarding developmental changes.



List of Acronyms to know in Special Education in Michigan

ADA	Americans with Disability Act (P.L. 101-336)
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
CA	Chronological Age
CBI	Community Based Instruction
DD	Developmental Disability
ESD	Educational Service District
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FERPA	Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (P.L. 93-390)
FTE	Full Time Equivalency
HH	Homebound and/or Hospitalized
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
IEP	Individualized Education Program (document)
IEPT	Individualized Educational Program Team
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
LEA	Local Educational Agency (Local School District)
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MAP	Mandated Activities Project
MDE	Michigan Department of Education
MET	Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team
OSE	Office of Special Education
OT	Occupational Therapist or Occupational Therapy
PAC	Parent Advisory Committee
PO	Performance Objective
PT	Physical Therapist or Physical Therapy
SEAC	State Special Education Advisory Committee
Section 504	The "nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap" portion of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended)
SSW	School Social Worker
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TC	Teacher Consultant
TMI	Trainable Mentally Impaired
TSLI	Teacher of the Speech and Language Impaired