



Navigating the Special Education Process: A Step-By-Step Guide

Identifying Need for Intervention:	Based on class performance and district assessments Interventions given in class or separate instruction Interventions adapted if student doesn't improve
Making a Referral:	Team member, including family, concerns lead to referral for special education Referral based on intervention non-response or other indications Suspected disability necessary for referral
Referral Phase:	School has 25 school days to determine if a student will be evaluated after the receipt of a referral Referral is legally required to be in writing, but many teams will accept verbal referrals The district must notify parents of the decision, many teams will include parents in this decision, but that is not required
Evaluation Phase:	School has 35 school days to complete the evaluation from the date of consent Written parent consent is required for evaluation Team decides evaluation areas and must cover all suspected areas of concern



Washington State Association of School Psychologists

Determining Eligibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Team decides eligibility based on evaluation dataWhole team including parents participatesProcess available if you disagree with all or part of results
Individualized Education Plan (IEP):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eligibility is followed by creating an IEP within 30 calendar daysFull-time public school students accept all recommended services when they consent to placement in special education at the IEP meetingPartially enrolled students can decline specific services
Crafting the IEP:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">IEP meeting separate from evaluation for thoughtful decisionsFamilies are valued members of IEP team and participate in crafting planStudents should participate in the IEP process as much as ableA draft IEP may be shared beforehand for parent considerationIEP identifies service start date, often shortly after the meeting, to include ensure family input
Ongoing Support:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expect evaluations every three years and annual IEP meetingsIEP meetings may follow re-evaluation, should be clearly communicatedEvaluations can be completed more frequently if neededFamily can always request additional meetings for IEP; for example to consider additional evaluation, if goals are met early, or if needs change

Published October 2023

816 W. Francis Ave. #214 · Spokane, WA 99205
www.wsasp.org