
For Parents: How to Request Testing from the School

If you suspect that your child has a learning disability, you can request specific testing to be administered. Be sure to put your request in writing and send it to the school principal.

You should not limit your request to a test for dyslexia, as the law requires that your child be assessed "in all areas related to the suspected disability" and it is possible that some of your child's problems may stem from another related condition. Rather, your letter should briefly state the reasons you suspect a learning disability, and then request full evaluation of your child. The letter should also say that you consent to evaluation under the terms of the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Be sure the letter is dated and is signed by you, and keep a copy for your records.

The law requires the school to complete an evaluation of your child within a reasonable time after you make the request. Unfortunately, federal law does not specify exactly how much time that is; the time frame may be set by regulations in your state. If not, it is generally assumed that 60 days would be considered reasonable.

If the evaluation shows that your child has dyslexia or a related disability, the law requires that the school provide whatever special education services are needed because of the learning disability. You are legally entitled to inspect and review all educational records that the school relies on in making its determination, so you will be able to see the specific results of whatever diagnostic testing is completed by the school.

If you are not satisfied with the results of the school's evaluation (IEP), you may request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) by a qualified evaluator of your choosing. The school must provide you with information about where the independent educational evaluation may be obtained. The IEE will be done at public expense, unless the school initiates a proceeding before an impartial hearing officer to oppose the second evaluation.

The school may ask you the reasons that you object to the initial examination; however, you are not required by law to give an explanation. Of course, like the initial request, you should make any request for an IEE in writing and keep copies of all correspondence.

If you are confused about procedures, you can get assistance from your state's Parent Training and Information (PTI) center. Every state has at least one PTI; these are agencies funded by the US Department of Education to provide training and information to parents of children with disabilities. You can find more information about PTI's here:

<http://www.taalliance.org/centers/>

You can also get help from your state's Protection and Advocacy or Disability Rights center. These agencies are also federally funded and provide services without cost. To find the agency for your state, go to this site: National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems

<http://www.napas.org/>

For more information on dyslexia legislation, refer to AB 1369