

## Arc Guide to Special Education Evaluation

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An evaluation for special education determines if a student is eligible for special education and related services. An initial (first) evaluation is the first special education evaluation. Usually, every three years after the initial evaluation, the student is reevaluated to determine if he/she continues to be eligible for special education and related services. (There are situations when the student may be re-evaluated before the end of three-year time period if a re-evaluation is determined to be necessary.) This guide will describe the evaluation process that begins after the district has agreed to complete an initial evaluation or a reevaluation.

Some areas of possible concern are that could be considered for an evaluation are:

- General health, vision and hearing
- Intellectual ability
- Social skills
- Emotions
- Behaviors
- School ability/academic skills
- Communication
- Everyday living skills
- Motor skills - use of arms and legs
- Use and need for any technology (pencil grips, listening devices, switches, electronic devices, etc.)
- Functional behavior - if there are any significant behaviors: what could be the cause, what is the desired behavior, where is the behavior occurring?
- Concerns related to a specific disability
- Transition skills - this type of assessment usually begins at grade 9, the focus on everyday living skills important for life as an adult

An evaluation planning meeting may be held to discuss the evaluation. The school may call the parent to discuss the evaluation or the school may send a permission to assess to the parent. (More information on this form is listed later in this guide.)

Evaluation Planning Meeting - This is a meeting to discuss and plan for the special education evaluation. The first part of the meeting focuses on what is happening at school: what concerns are parents, the student and school staff have; what are the areas of concern; what is working and not working; and why is a special education evaluation being done. The second part of the meeting focuses on what specific evaluations will be done and who will be doing them.

- The following people attend:
  - The parent
  - The student (often beginning at grade 9)

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- A district representative (who is often the school principal)
- School staff with expertise in the areas of the concerns

In most situations, the evaluation includes:

- Information from parents and school staff
- Standardized tests - same test given in the same way to many people and graded in the same way
- Observation of the student in school settings
- Review of classroom tests and information

Evaluation - additional information:

- More than one type of test for each area of concern is usually done
- Tests are done in all areas of concern
- Every effort should be made to administer in the student's language, unless that is not possible
- Tests are given by trained staff and given according to instructions
- It is possible that the team may decide that no additional testing is needed to decide that the student is a child with a disability
- Evaluations done by medical staff and other professionals other than school staff may be provided to school staff
- A file review is a term used by school staff. A file review may be done instead of doing some new evaluation(s)
  - A file review means reviewing what is in the student's school file. This could include previous evaluations, testing results, progress reports, etc.

Evaluation Plan

- The school will provide the parents with a notice that describes:
  - The specific areas to be assessed
  - The type of assessment that will be done
  - Who will be doing the assessment
- The notice is called a Prior Written Notice (PWN)
- Parents should review the evaluation plan, fully understand what the school will be doing, and ask any questions before signing the PWN
- The PWN includes a signature page for the parent to sign they agree with the evaluation plan, disagree with the plan or have questions about the plan
- For the first (initial) evaluation, the parent must sign the notice before the special education evaluation can begin
- For reevaluations, the school can start the evaluation if the parent does not return the form within 14 calendar days

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The school has 30 school days to complete the evaluation. The 30 school day time line begins:

- After the school has received the signed PWN back from the parent
- 14 calendar days after the school sent the PWN

Evaluation Meeting (Ask the school to provide you with a copy of the evaluation report so you can read it before the evaluation meeting. The school is not required to provide it to you before the meeting.) After the evaluation is completed, an evaluation review meeting is held. At the meeting, the evaluation team will provide information on the results of the evaluations. Additionally,

- The evaluation team which includes the parent will discuss the child's strengths and needs
- The team determines if the child is eligible for special education and related services
- The parent will receive a copy of the evaluation report
- If the child is eligible for special education and related services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed. The IEP meeting may be part of the evaluation review meeting or a separate meeting will be held.

Resources:

- Minnesota Rule 3525.2710 Evaluations and Reevaluations  
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=3525.2710>
- Arc Guide to Functional Behavior Assessment  
[https://arcminnesota.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2016/07/Arc-Guide-to-Functional-Behavior-Assessment-FBA\\_-June-2016.pdf](https://arcminnesota.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2016/07/Arc-Guide-to-Functional-Behavior-Assessment-FBA_-June-2016.pdf)
- Arc Guide to the Individualized Education Program (IEP)  
[https://arcminnesota.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2016/08/Arc-Guide-to-Individualized-Education-Program\\_July\\_2016.pdf](https://arcminnesota.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2016/08/Arc-Guide-to-Individualized-Education-Program_July_2016.pdf)
- Arc Guide to Special Education Evaluation Tools  
<https://arcminnesota.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2016/04/Arc-Guide-to-Special-Education-Evaluation-Tools.pdf>
- Arc Guide to Special Education Testing Terms  
<https://arcminnesota.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2017/10/Arc-Guide-to-Special-Education-TestingTerms-1.pdf>

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