



Contact Us!

701-837-7500

info@pathfinder-nd.org

pathfinder-nd.org

Special Education Evaluation Pocket Guide

The Why, What and How of the Special Education Evaluation Process (Webinar)

Part 1: <http://pathfinder-nd.org/resource.php?r=322>

Part 2: <http://pathfinder-nd.org/resource.php?r=323>

Guidelines: Evaluation Process NDDPI:

<https://pathfinder-nd.org/resource.php?r=118>

Evaluating Children for Disability CPIR

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/evaluation/>

Parent Guide to NDMTSS

<https://pathfinder-nd.org/ndmtss/ndmtss-brochure.pdf>

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) - FAQ NDDPI

https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/SpeEd/FAQ_IEE_NDDPI%20Website.pdf

Additional Resources

Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR):

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

ND Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI)

<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/>

Pathfinder Services of ND

<https://www.pathfinder-nd.org/>

Additional Resources

Things to Remember

- If a child is identified as possibly needing special education and related services, follow-up services and interventions are tried before a referral for a special education evaluation is made by the parents or school district.
- Before conducting an initial special education evaluation of a child, a public agency must provide parents with a Prior Written Notice, a Procedural Safeguards Notice and obtain informed written consent from the child's parents.
- Once consent is given by the child's parents, the initial evaluation process must be completed within 60 calendar days.
- ND Department of Public Instruction has developed a special education evaluation process. Components within this process include the Student Profile: Evaluation, Assessment Plan, and Integrated Written Assessment Report.
- An accurate, individualized and comprehensive special education evaluation includes a variety of assessment tools and strategies that are administered by trained and knowledgeable individuals.
- An IEP meeting must be held within 30 calendar days after it is determined that a student has one of the disabilities listed in IDEA and may need special education and related services.
- A reevaluation must occur at least once every three years. A reevaluation may occur not more than once a year unless the parent and the public agency agree otherwise.

Things to Remember

1. A child is identified as possibly needing additional services.
2. Follow-up services and interventions are tried.
3. A referral for a special education evaluation is made.
4. Multidisciplinary Team is identified.
5. A Student Profile: Evaluation is completed.
6. An Assessment Plan is developed and implemented.
7. Integrated Written Assessment Report is developed and given to the parents.

▶ **LOOK INSIDE FOR MORE** ▶

Special Education Evaluation Process

Summary Terms

Independent Educational Evaluation - An evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of the student.

Informed written consent - The school district must have the informed written consent from the child's parents before evaluating their child for the first time. Parents must understand that their consent is voluntary.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) - Once a referral for a comprehensive evaluation is made, a multidisciplinary team must be identified. Individuals must be identified by MDT members who, because of their expertise or special knowledge of the student, can observe, gather data, and assess any aspect of the student's functioning that may be affected by the suspected disability.

Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) - A structured problem-solving process used by educators and parents to develop interventions for a student who is experiencing difficulty in classroom achievement or behavior.

Prior Written Notice - A notice to inform parents a reasonable time before a public agency proposes or refuses to take specific actions, such as initiating an initial evaluation of the child. The purpose behind this thorough explanation is to ensure that parents are fully informed, understand what is being proposed or refused, and understand what an evaluation of their child will involve.

Procedural Safeguards Notice - A comprehensive written explanation that public agencies must provide parents on specific occasions to fully inform them of the IDEA procedural safeguards. Initial referral or parent request for evaluation are two occasions that prompt the provision of the procedural safeguards notice.

Terms and Acronyms

Special Education Reevaluation

- The reevaluation process assures the student's total needs have been identified and are being met and confirms the student has a disability. The NDDPI Guidelines: Evaluation Process, provides a description of three possible options relating to the reevaluation process.
- No Reevaluation is Necessary
- When the formal reevaluation process begins, the parent and public agency discuss the advantages and disadvantages of conducting a reevaluation and the effects a reevaluation might have on a child's educational program. This discussion is documented on the Student Profile: Evaluation.
- OR No Additional Information is Needed
- If there is a decision to conduct a reevaluation, the IEP Team and qualified professionals review existing child data and complete the Student Profile: Evaluation. If the Team determines that no additional information is needed, the parents are notified of their rights to request additional assessments. The team completes an Integrated Written Assessment Report.
- OR Additional Information is Needed
- If there is a decision to conduct a reevaluation, the IEP Team and qualified professionals will review existing child data and complete the Student Profile: Evaluation. If the Team determines that new information is needed, consent is obtained from the child's parents and an Assessment Plan is completed. Once the assessments and other information is gathered, the team completes an Integrated Written Assessment Report.

Special Education Reevaluation

ND Special Education Evaluation Process

1 **A child may be identified as possibly needing special education and related services.** Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), States must find, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities from birth to age 21 who may need early intervention or special education services. As part of this process, school districts perform screening activities to help identify these children.

2 **Follow-Up Services and Interventions:** After screening, information is collected for every student. Professionals review the results to decide if the student should:

1. Be screened again later,
2. Be referred for follow-up services at school or another agency, or
3. Be referred for a full evaluation.

For school-age children, follow-up support may be provided through an intervention process. This could include the Response to Intervention (RTI), the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), or a building-level team process. An intervention process is a structured way for teachers and parents to work together to create strategies to help a student who is having difficulty with learning or behavior.

3 **Referral for Special Education Evaluation-** If the follow-up services and interventions tried by the parent and school do not help the student, the next step is to collect more information through a referral for a full special education evaluation. Either the parent or the school can make a referral for this initial evaluation.

4 **Multidisciplinary Team (MDT):** After a referral for a full evaluation is made, a multidisciplinary team (MDT) is formed. This team carries out the special education evaluation process for the child. Possible team members may include:

- Parent(s)
- A representative from the school or local education agency (LEA)
- The student's regular education teacher
- A special education teacher or provider
- Someone who can explain what the evaluation results mean for the student's learning and instruction

5 **Student Profile- Evaluation:** After the multidisciplinary team (MDT) is formed, the team meets to create the Student Profile: Evaluation. This profile gives a full picture of the child and identifies areas where more information is needed.

To create the profile, the team reviews what is already known about the student. This includes looking at existing evaluation data, such as:

- The student's school records
- Recent test scores from State or district assessments
- Classroom work and performance

6 **Assessment Plan-** An Assessment Plan is created and carried out after the Student Profile: Evaluation is completed. The plan explains the assessment questions that need to be answered. It also describes the specific assessments and strategies that will be used to gather information and identifies who is responsible for collecting each piece of information.

7 **Integrated Written Assessment Report (IWAR)-** After the Assessment Plan information is collected, the team writes an Integrated Written Assessment Report (IWAR). This report combines findings from all sources and documents the child's strengths and needs. At the IWAR meeting, the team decides whether the student's educational needs are caused by a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The report must clearly state whether the student has a disability and, if so, what the disability is. A copy of the IWAR, including the determination of eligibility and educational needs, must be provided to the parents.

This brochure was developed from information located in:


ND Department of Public Instruction, *Guidelines: Evaluation Process.*


<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/SpEd/Guidelines/Evaluation%20Process%209-2017.pdf>


Center for Parent Information and Resources, CPIR, *Introduction to Evaluation and Initial Evaluation & Reevaluation.* <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

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Pathfinder Services of ND (PSND) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides educational resources and navigational supports through statewide services to families, youth, and professionals.

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