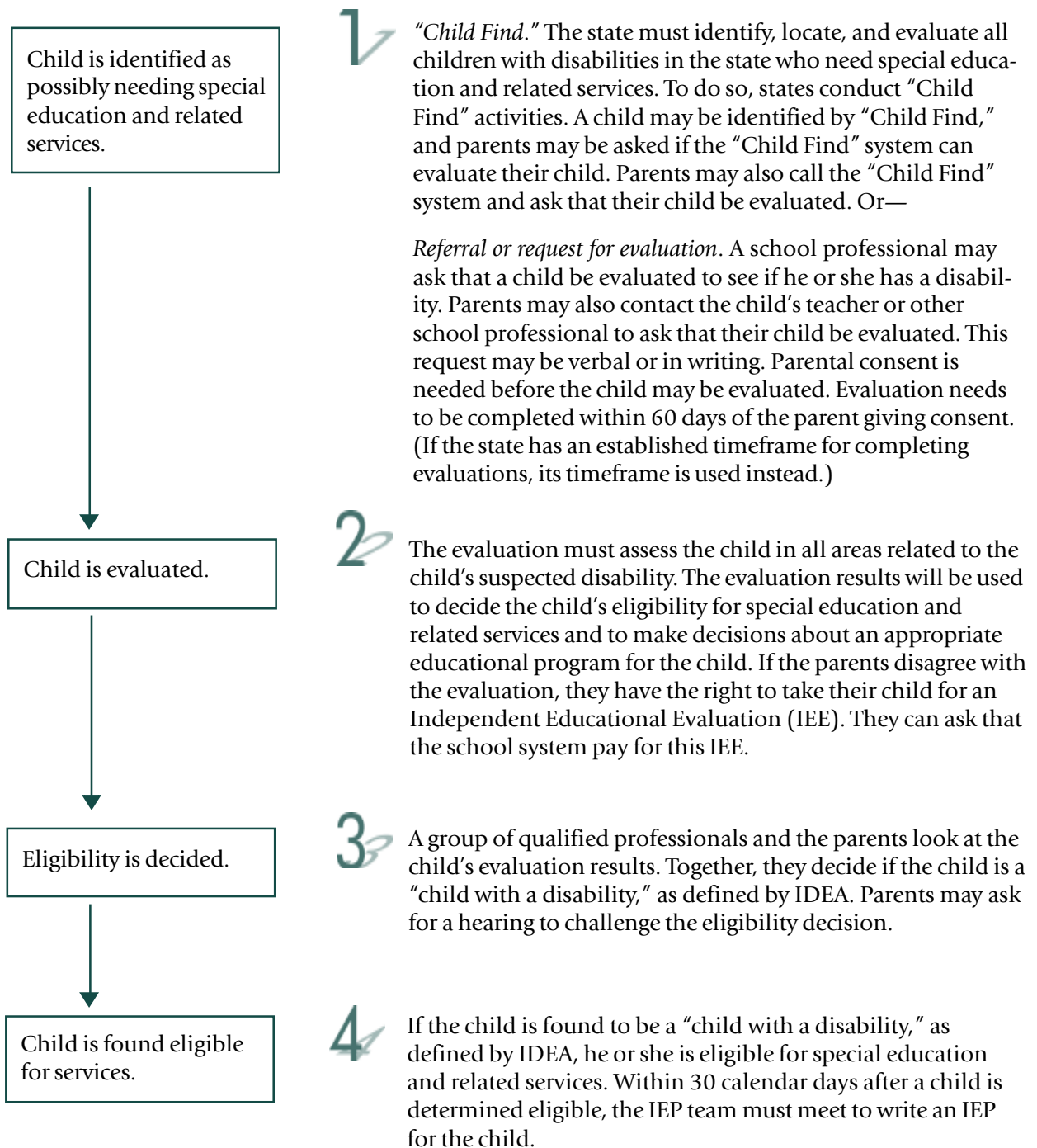


The Basic Special Education Process under IDEA 2004

Here's a brief look at how a student is identified as having a disability and needing special education and related services.



Excerpted from Küpper, L. (2011). *Communicating with your child's school through letter writing* (Parent's Guide 9). Washington, DC: National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY). Available online at: <http://www.nichcy.org/schoolage/steps/>

The Basic Special Education Process under IDEA 2004 (cont.)

Once the student has been found eligible for services, the IEP must be written. The two steps below *summarize* what is involved in writing the IEP.

IEP meeting is scheduled.

5

The school system schedules and conducts the IEP meeting. School staff must:

- contact the participants, including the parents;
- notify parents early enough to make sure they have an opportunity to attend;
- schedule the meeting at a time and place agreeable to parents and the school;
- tell the parents the purpose, time, and location of the meeting;
- tell the parents who will be attending; and
- tell the parents that they may invite people to the meeting who have knowledge or special expertise about the child.

IEP meeting is held and the IEP is written.

6

The IEP team gathers to talk about the child's needs and write the student's IEP. Parents and the student (when appropriate) are part of the team. If the child's placement is decided by a different group, the parents must be part of that group as well.

Before the school system may provide special education and related services to the child for the first time, the parents must give consent. The child begins to receive services as soon as possible after the IEP is written and this consent is given.

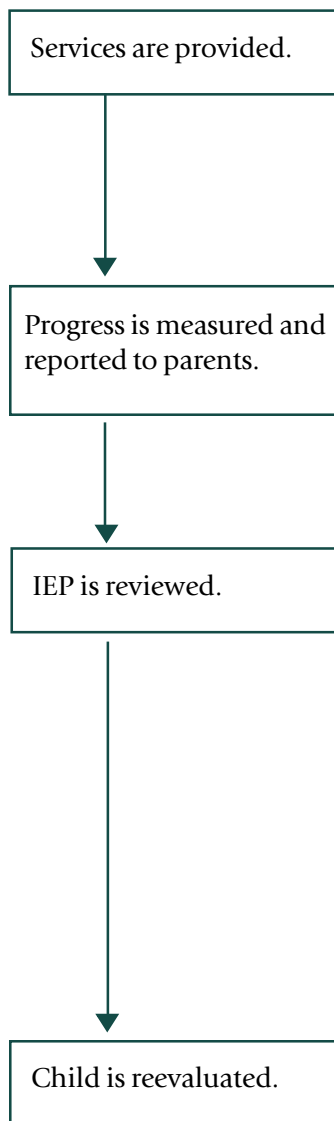
If the parents do not agree with the IEP and placement, they may discuss their concerns with other members of the IEP team and try to work out an agreement. If they still disagree, parents can ask for mediation, or the school may offer mediation. Parents may file a complaint with the state education agency and may request a due process hearing, at which time mediation must be available.



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The Basic Special Education Process under IDEA 2004 (cont.)

Here is a brief summary of what happens *after* the IEP is written.



7

The school makes sure that the child's IEP is being carried out as it was written. Parents are given a copy of the IEP. Each of the child's teachers and service providers has access to the IEP and knows his or her specific responsibilities for carrying out the IEP. This includes the accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided to the child, in keeping with the IEP.

8

The child's progress toward the annual goals is measured, as stated in the IEP. His or her parents are periodically informed of their child's progress toward achieving the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, perhaps issued at the same time as report cards).

9

The child's IEP is reviewed by the IEP team at least once a year, or more often if the parents or school ask for a review. If necessary, the IEP is revised. Parents, as team members, must be invited to attend these meetings. Parents can make suggestions for changes, can agree or disagree with the IEP goals, and agree or disagree with the placement.

If parents do not agree with the IEP and placement, they may discuss their concerns with other members of the IEP team and try to work out an agreement. There are several options, including additional testing, an independent evaluation, or asking for mediation or a due process hearing. They may also file a complaint with the state education agency.

10

At least every three years the child must be reevaluated, unless parents and the school system agree that a reevaluation is not necessary. The purpose of the reevaluation is to find out if the child continues to be a "child with a disability," as defined by IDEA, and what the child's educational needs are. Parents must give their consent for their child's reevaluation.

A child may be reevaluated more often if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher asks for a new evaluation.