

Taking an Autism Diagnosis to School



Presented by
Lisa Mattheiss, Executive Director



Source of Diagnosis

- Does it matter where my diagnosis came from?
 - Educational
 - Medical



Definition of Special Education

Specialized instruction

The Scope and Purpose Of Special Education

Congress finds education can be made more effective by having high expectations... in order to meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children...to lead productive and independent adult lives.

IDEA 601(c) (5)(A)(i-ii)



Letter to Request PsychoEducational Evaluation

Dear (Name of Principal)

I am the parent of (**name of child**). My child is having problems with his/her school work (**and/or behavior**) and I feel s/he may have special needs. Please consider this letter as a formal referral for a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation to see if s/he qualifies for special education and related services. (**I would also like him/her to be evaluated for Gifted Services**). I am available to meet, if needed, to sign any necessary consent to begin the process and to be provided with information regarding procedures and the types of evaluations offered by (**insert School System Name**) including an explanation of "Informed Consent" for an Initial Evaluation. Please provide me with any other information I may need.

Please contact me within the next 5 days if you need any further consent and call me (**or email me**) if you have any questions. Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent record.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)
(Your Telephone Number)
(Your Email Address)

Copy: (List all the people you are sending copies to. Usually the principal, special education director for school or county, and classroom teacher are sufficient.)

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• Prior to an initial evaluation, parents must provide written consent.

• TN uses Initial Assessment form ED-3073 – Rev. 8/08

• Usually signed at an "Assessment Team Meeting"

Initial Assessment Form ED-3073

On _____ (Date) _____ was referred for a comprehensive assessment for determination of eligibility and need of special educational services. This referral is based upon a review of current classroom performance, past educational records, and/or screening information. We are requesting permission to assess you child in order to provide additional information to help us plan a more effective educational program. Note: As the parent of a child who may be eligible for special education, the Notice of Procedural Safeguards brochure is being provided for your information.

The reasons I request your permission to assess your child is (are):

child is working above grade-level or below grade level in one or more basic skills

child's behavior is inconsistent with that expected for children of student's age

child's rate of progress has increased decreased

child's speech/language skills are inconsistent w/ those expected for children of student's age

child has entered our school system with an out of state and/or nonpublic evaluation

parent preschool referral

The exact procedures to be considered for your child's assessment are detailed below. The extent of the assessment will depend upon the severity of the problem.

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Vision/Hearing Screening	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Audiological Evaluation
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Classroom Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Functional Vision Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Academic Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Personality Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Intellectual Functioning	<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Vocational Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Speech/Language Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Assistive Technology Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Gross/Fine Motor Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Self-Regulative Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Visual/Auditory Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> 16. Functional Behavior Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. General and/or Social Behaviors	<input type="checkbox"/> 17. Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Early Childhood Development	<input type="checkbox"/> 18. Other _____

Please sign this form and return it to the school. Your signature shall not be construed as consent for placement in any special education program. (When the assessment has been completed, you will be invited to an IEP team meeting in order to discuss the findings, determine your child's eligibility for special education services and, if need, plan an appropriate educational program for your child. If you have any information you would like to share pertaining to your child's assessment, please forward it to the person named below or bring it to the meeting.)

I HAVE REVIEWED THE BROCHURE CONCERNING THE NOTICE OF PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS Yes No

Please check one of the following:

I give permission for an individual assessment

I do not give permission for an individual assessment

Date _____ Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

Phone _____ Address _____

If you have any questions, you may contact one of the following:

Name _____	Department/Position _____	Telephone Number _____
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School _____ Teacher _____

DATE RECEIVED FROM PARENT: _____ / _____ / _____ Grade _____

ED-3073 - Rev. 8/08 Consent For Initial Assessment

Eligibility Meeting

Who attends this meeting?
 "A group of qualified professionals and the parent of the child" IDEA 2006 Regulations 300.306(a)(1)

What information should parents receive?
 "The public agency provides a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of determination of eligibility at no cost to the parent"
 IDEA 2006 Regulations 300.306(a)(2)

What does "Exceptional" mean?
 Exceptional "Yes" is a deficit area

Eligibility – 2 Prong Test

Is there a disability? Yes No → Does the child need special education and related services? Yes No → IEP team meeting scheduled? Yes No → Not eligible under IDEA; may be eligible under Section 504

Autism
 Deaf-Blindness
 Deafness
 Developmental Delay**+
 Emotional Disturbance
 Functional Delay**
 Hearing Impairment
 Intellectual Disability
 Intellectually Gifted**
 Multiple Disabilities
 Orthopedic Impairment
 Other Health Impairment
 Specific Learning Disabilities
 Speech or Language Impairment
 Traumatic Brain Disorder
 Visual Impairment
 ** Tennessee specific category
 **+ LEA specific category

- Eligibility Meeting
- Eligibility Report
- IDEA 2006 Regulations 300.306

2014-2015 Tennessee Department of Education - Special Education Eligibility Report

Name: Abbie Marie Year: 2014-2015 Grade: 10-12th School: Tennessee Education System Proposed Reevaluation Eligibility Date: 12/15/2014

Eligibility Determination Date: 12/15/2014

1. Based on information from a variety of sources that have been documented and carefully considered, the IEP team has determined:
 Yes [] No - The student meets the criteria for a disability consistent with Tennessee State Regulations.
 Yes [] No - The disability directly impacts educational performance in school learning environments.
 Yes [] No - The student is not eligible for special education and related services.
 Yes [] No - The student has not met an approved level of the student's educational achievement.

2. The IEP team has reviewed and approved the student's educational achievement.
 Yes [] No - The student's educational achievement is not at an approved level.
 Yes [] No - The student's educational achievement is at an approved level.

3. Educational team member initials: If any, name: _____
 Yes [] No - The student's educational achievement is not at an approved level.
 Yes [] No - The student's educational achievement is at an approved level.

4. Special Education Report: Yes: Date: 07/15/2014 Hearing Screening Report: Yes: Date: 07/15/2014

ASSESSMENT TEAM

Your signature indicates that you were involved in the assessment by providing evaluation, observations or input. Otherwise, no signature would be needed.

Position	Signature	Date	Initials	Printed
Parent	_____	_____	_____	_____
General Education Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
Supervisor of the Service	_____	_____	_____	_____
Assessment Specialist	_____	_____	_____	_____
Special Education Teacher (Optional)	_____	_____	_____	_____

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

This student is **ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION** because she meets the State of Tennessee's eligibility standards for Specific Learning Disability (SLD).
 This student is **ELIGIBLE for Special Education** because she meets the State of Tennessee's eligibility standards for Specific Learning Disability (SLD).
 This student is **NOT ELIGIBLE for Special Education** because she does not meet Tennessee's eligibility criteria.

Position	Signature	Date	Initials	Printed
Parent	_____	_____	_____	_____
LEA Representative	_____	_____	_____	_____
Special Education Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
General Education Teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
Inspector of the Service	_____	_____	_____	_____

I received a copy of my child's evaluation reports utilized in determining eligibility under education program.
 I did not receive a copy of my child's evaluation reports. Explanation: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____
 IEP Team Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date Eligibility Report was given to parent(s): 12/15/2014
 If the parent(s) did not attend, the parent signature for forwarding and explaining the Eligibility Report to the parent(s) along with their rights is: _____

Prior Eligibility Under Different Categories

- Does it matter? Do I need to change the eligibility category when I get a new diagnosis? Where else could you put it?

What Happens If You Disagree



1. Share your concerns
2. Ask for reassessment
3. Request further evaluation
4. Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)
5. Mediation
6. Due Process hearing
7. Resolution Session

Special Education Terms

- FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education
- IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
There are four main parts to IDEA
 - Part A-Addresses General Provisions
 - Part B- Covers the assistance for education of all children with disabilities (3 – 21 inclusive)
 - Part C- Covers Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth-3)
 - Part D- Addresses national activities to improve the education of children with disabilities
- IEP - Individualized Education Program
- IEP Team - People that develop the IEP and make all educational decisions
- IFSP - Individualized Family Service Plan
- LEA/SEA
 - Local Education Agency (your school system)
 - State Education Agency (TN Department of Special Populations)
- Related Services
 - OT - Occupational Therapy
 - PT - Physical Therapy
 - SLP - Speech & Language Pathology

There are MANY more acronyms you will hear so if you are not sure...ASK!

IEP Team	
Core Members	Situational Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents of the child • Regular education teacher <i>of the child</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not less than one if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment • Special education teacher <i>of the child</i> • School (LEA) representative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction • Knowledgeable about the general curriculum • Knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the LEA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation/instructional interpreter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results • Other individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who have knowledge or special expertise concerning the child including related service personnel • The child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whenever appropriate, and the student must be invited for transition planning • Transition services participants
<p>IDEA 2006 Regulations 300.321 15</p>	

Process of IEP Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals • Evaluations • Eligibility • PLOP • Develop Goals • Add related services • Special Factors • Measuring Progress • Determine Placement

Students Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character traits • Topical knowledge base - Their obsession is a foundational strength! • Gifts, talents • Learning styles

<p>Photo by alovedag</p>

Parent Concerns

- WRITE THEM!
 - Paragraph
 - Bullets
 - Lists
 - Outlines
- Prioritize
- Now you have an agenda for your meeting



Present Levels of Performance

- PLOP MUST tell a story.
 - What are scores?
 - What are functional specifics about the child?
 - What are his strengths?
 - What are her struggles?
 - What does she need assistance with?
 - What prompt levels does he need?

See Prompt Hierarchy – www.LifeLineFamilies.org. Go to Resources, Downloads, look for Behavioral Prompt Hierarchy

Present Levels of Performance

- The present level of performance must include information from tests and specific information regarding what a child can and cannot do in a specific area. The IEP must state how the child is currently doing in school.
- This information can come from a variety of sources:
 - Results from classroom tests
 - Individual evaluations
 - Observations by teachers and parents
 - Input from related service providers
 - Knowledge from outside evaluators must be considered.







Context -
Where will the activity occur?
 (could be more than one of these)

- In the General Education Classroom
- In the Resource Classroom
- In the Comprehensive Development Classroom
- In the CALMM –
- On the Bus
- On the playground
- During (Specific Class/Activity)
- In the Lunchroom
- In the Restroom
- Generalizing skill across multiple environments, including...
- During class time...
- During opening exercises...
- During transition between classes...
- During lunch/snack...
- During the lecture portion of history class...

SAMPLE GOAL:

IN/ON/DURING _____ (CONTEXT) MARY WILL BE ABLE TO _____, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE ABILITY TO _____ WITH/WITHOUT PROMPTS (SPECIFY TYPE), MEASURED BY _____ (WHO) _____ (WHEN) _____ (HOW).

WHAT SUPPORTS/SERVICES/ACCOMMODATIONS /MODIFICATIONS/RESEARCH BASED STRATEGIES/MATERIALS/TEACHING METHODS WILL BE USED?

Use Meaningful Measurement Criteria For Mastery

- Err on the side of HIGH EXPECTATIONS!
 - Congress finds education can be made more effective by having high expectations...in order to meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children...to lead productive and independent adult lives. IDEA 601©(5)(A)(i-ii).
- Remember the purpose of goals are to be the foundation for future skills.
 - 70% - Would you build a house on 70% of a foundation?
 - 100% may or may not be reasonable - Is anyone perfect all the time?
- **NOT** 70% of 4 out of 5....Use one or the other. 70% of 4 out of 5 (80%) is actually 56%.

Data Collection

- Specify who will record
- Specify how it will be recorded
- Specify when it will be recorded
- Specify what will be recorded
- Specify opportunities vs. consecutive opportunities and created vs. natural opportunities
- What evaluation/testing mechanism (specific test) will be used?

Prompt Criteria

- What level of prompt does the child need? (see Prompt Hierarchy)
- Do we need multiple benchmarks to address progression to independence?
 - Besides prompt hierarchy, of teacher intervention, consider these
 - At teacher request, student will...
 - At peer prompting, student will play...

Personnel Responsible

- SPECIFY! Who is the parent going to ask about the goal? Who should the supervisor hold responsible for this child's progress? What is the chain of command?
 - Classroom teacher
 - Co-teacher
 - Therapist
 - Counselor
 - Case manager
 - Special education teacher
 - Paraprofessional
 - Who has the qualifications to provide the services that you just decided are necessary?

Supplemental Supports for Child & School Personnel

- What services?
- What supports?
- What accommodations?
- What modifications?
- What research based strategies?
- What materials?
- What teaching methods?
- What assistive technology?
- What specific curriculum?
- What training for the school staff?

Related Services In The IEP

The term related services means "transportation, and such developmental, corrective, or other supportive services...as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education and includes..." (list is NOT exhaustive)

- TRANSPORTATION
- SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY
- AUDIOLOGY SERVICES
- INTERPRETING SERVICES
- PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
- PHYSICAL & OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
- RECREATION & THERAPEUTIC RECREATION
- SCHOOL NURSE SERVICES
- SOCIAL WORK SERVICES
- COUNSELING SERVICES
- ORIENTATION & MOBILITY
- MEDICAL SERVICES (DIAGNOSIS & EVALUATION)
- SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES
- EARLY IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT

Related Services



- More is not always better
- Clarify Pull-Out or In Classroom Provision
- Clarify One on One or Group
- Clarify time schedule for therapy
- Difference between medical therapy and educational therapy

ESY (Extended School Year)

- Degree of regression/time for skill recoupment
- Degree of disability
- Parent skills & abilities – ability of student's parent to provide educational support at home
- Student rate of progress (when compared to other children with the same or similar diagnosis)
- Teacher and parent interviews and recommendations
- Data based observations of the pupil
- Consideration of any behavioral/physical problems
- Least restrictive environment considerations (ability of the student to interact with typical peers)
- Availability of alternative (community) resources for serving the student
- Areas in the student's program/curriculum which require continuous attention,
- Consideration of the student's vocational needs

***For complete list, go to www.LifeLineFamilies.org Resources, Downloads, and Look for *ESY Joe Fisher Memo 4-23-01-TNDOE Memo of Clarification on Extended School Year*

Placement

All placement decisions are to be made AFTER the child's program (goals and services) have been determined by the IEP team.



Placement is:

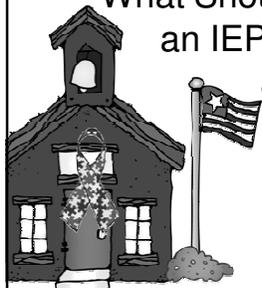
- Determined annually
- Based on student's IEP
- As close as possible to student's home
- Made in conformity with the LRE provisions of IDEA

LRE means:

- Your child's education should be carried out in the most typical setting possible
- Your child should have opportunities to interact with his/her peers
- Not every child with a disability will be educated in a typical class

Least Restrictive Environment

- “To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities...are educated with children who are not disabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”
- IDEA 2006 Regulations 300.114(a)(2)(i)(ii)



What Should Be Included in an IEP for a child on the autism spectrum?

Probable Minimum IEP for Child with Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Social Emotional/Behavior Goals
- Prevocational/Vocational (depending on age) (this covers organizational skills)
- If the child is turning 14 or older, transition goals should be present
- Any OT/PT/Sensory supplemental services
- Speech vs. Language Communication goals
- Academic (as necessary)
- Assistive technology or augmentative communication device (as necessary)

Teach Social Skills

- Social Stories
- Role Play
- Pragmatic Language

<p>Sometimes I feel frustrated or upset.</p> 	<p>It's OK to feel frustrated but I need to stop and calm down.</p> 
<p>My work doesn't need to be perfect. I just need to try my best.</p> 	<p>When I am frustrated or upset I can tell Mrs. Ashley or Mrs. Holbrook and they can</p> 

Good ways to touch other people at school

	<p>I can tap someone lightly on the shoulder to say "Excuse me".</p>
	<p>I can give a high 5 to say "Great!"</p>
	<p>I can shake hands to say "It's nice to see you".</p>

Behavior

- Choice? Defiance?
- Sensory Overload?
- Include goals to teach appropriate behavior
- Write goals using PBIS
 - Look for and count the POSITIVE!



Behavior

- Utilize Functional Behavior Assessments
- Utilize Behavior Intervention Plans
- Document BIP existence in the IEP



Behavior - Include De-escalation Strategies

- Incredible 5 point scale
- Tools for processing emotions

5	<p>I can't stand this and ready to explode.</p> <p>I want to hit someone, something, or throw something. I need an adult to help me go to my safe place as I can calm down.</p> 
4	<p>I am getting too angry.</p> <p>My brain isn't working clearly. I might say or do something I will be sorry for later. I need to go to my safe place to calm down.</p> 
3	<p>I am getting really irritated.</p> <p>I need to walk away from this situation. I will tell my teacher when I need a break.</p> 
2	<p>I am doing OK.</p> <p>I'm overwhelmed but I can cope. I can say where I am and keep working. I can control my anger by myself.</p> 
1	<p>I am doing great.</p> <p>I feel good about myself and about what is going on around me.</p> 

Behavior - Plan for Transitions



Organizational Skills



- Begin early – don't just organize FOR them, teach them TO organize
- Don't skip steps – A, B, then C in order
- Do they need supports? Technology?

Address Sensory Processing

- CALMM Classroom Summary
For details look up www.LifeLineFamilies.org Resources, Downloads, Look for CALMM Classroom Overview 2012
- Identify Sensory Integration techniques through sensory needs evaluation (OT)
- Create Sensory Diet

Communication

- Difference between Speech & Language
- Specify communication strategies
- Incorporate real-life social situations and/or school work
- Augmentative Communication Strategies & Devices
- PECS, PODD, LAMP, ASL

High Expectations

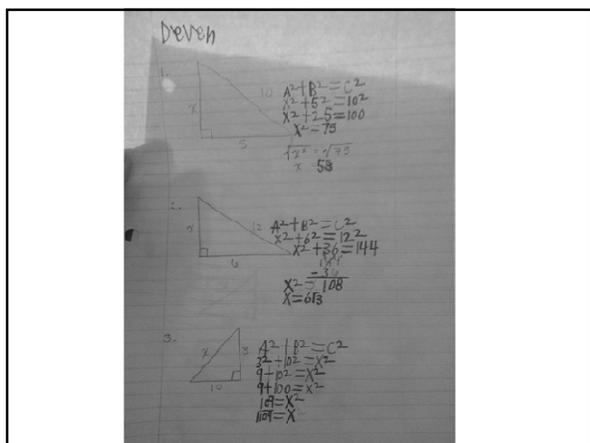


Photo Kshuterman

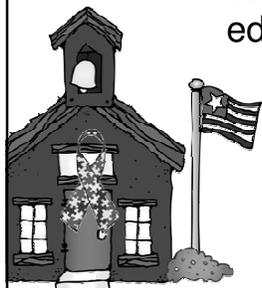
- Academics - Specify your intentions for diploma early
- Social – Typical peer interactions
- Communication – Verbal, nonverbal, behavior
- Physical – Assume sensory & address
- Emotional – set up for success

ASSUME COMPETENCE!





Who do I contact to request
evaluation for special
education services?



Hamilton County, Tennessee

- Margaret Abernathy, Special Education Director
- Exceptional Education
- 3074 Hickory Valley Road
- Chattanooga, TN 37421
- Phone: 423-209-8450
- Fax:423-209-8455
- Abernathy_margaret@hcde.org

Walker County, Georgia

- Angie Ingram, Special Education Director
- Advancing Education Center
- 925 Osburn Road
- Chickamauga, GA 30707
- 706-375-9900 Fax 706-375-9905
- angieingram@walkerschools.org

Catoosa County, Georgia

- Becky Connor, Special Education Director
- Performance Learning Center
- Fort Oglethorpe, GA
- 706-965-4052
- beckyconner@catoosa.ga.us.edu

Dade County, Georgia

- Debra Brackett, Special Education Director
- Dade County Department of Education
- 52 Tradition Lane/PO Box 188
- Trenton, GA 30752
- debrabrackett@dadecs.org

Who Do I Call?



- With questions –
 - “Is that legal?”
 - “Where can I find that in the law?”
 - “What do I do next?”
 - “What workshops can I sign up for?”



Reaching Families with Support, Education, & Resources

LifeLine is a family to family organization that serves families affected by special needs. LifeLine provides

- Parent and Professional Training –
 - Special Education Rights, Diagnosis Specific, Topical Training
- Support Groups – FamilyShare (Chattanooga & NWGA)
- IEP/504/IFSP/ISP/Homeschool Consultations
 - Understanding the document
 - Strategizing for meetings
 - Creation of education plans
- Family Resource Center - Email List, website
www.LifeLineFamilies.org
- ParentLink – Parent Mentoring Training & Mentor Connection Opportunities
- Special Needs Ministry - Sunday School, Awana, and Church Leadership Training & Vision Casting

Our goal is to
“Help Caregivers Thrive, Not Just Survive!”
LifeLine operates primarily in the Hamilton County/Northwest Georgia Region but has served families now in 20+ states.

State Parent Training & Information Centers

- **STEP (Support & Training for Exceptional Parents) Inc.** 712 Professional Plaza, Greeneville, TN 37745 800-280-STEP
www.tnstep.org
- **Parent to Parent of Georgia, Inc.**
 3070 Presidential Parkway, Suite 130
 Atlanta, GA 800-229-2038 www.p2pga.org
- **Alabama Parent Education Center**
 10520 US 231, Wetumpka, AL
 334-567-2252 www.alabamaparentcenter.com

Questions?

- Please fill out your evaluations
- Thank you!



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The IEP is the KEY
A plan that works!

Special Thanks:
Joey Ellis, STEP, Inc.

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