

The Special Education Process In Washington State

Special education is provided to eligible children in Washington State from ages 3 to 22. A school team helps identify the needs of children and determines the types of supports they need to make progress in their education.

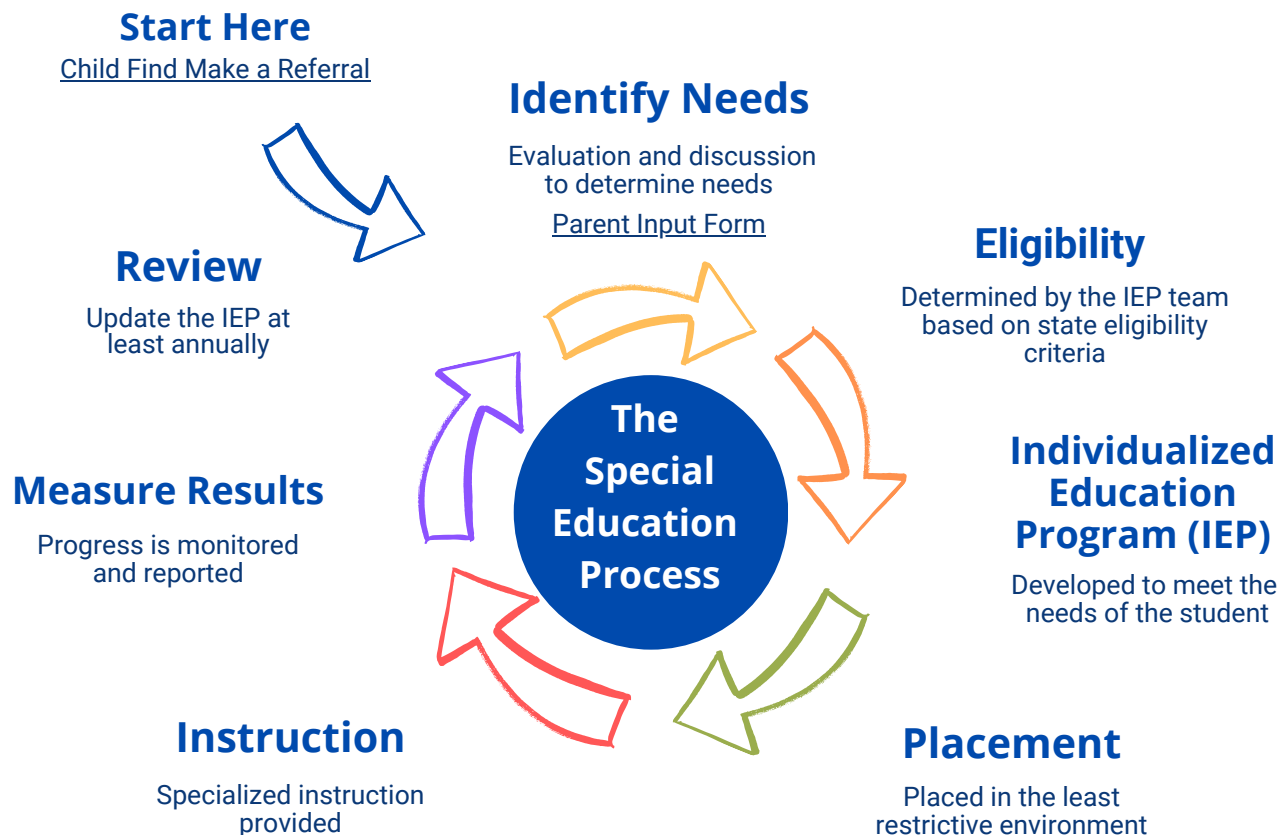
The process begins with a request for evaluation.

You or someone at the school who is concerned can ask the school to evaluate your child for special education. The school can only do an evaluation or provide services when you give consent as the parent.

Students determined eligible for special education services must meet all three of the following criteria:

- The student must have a disability or disabilities.
- The student's disability/disabilities adversely affect educational performance.
- The student's unique needs cannot be addressed through education in general education classes alone – with or without individual accommodations and requires specially designed instruction (SDI).

[Learn more about the evaluation process here](#)



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Special Education Process Explained

Read the [10 Basic Steps in Special Education](#) from the Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR).

Identify Needs

After a request for evaluation, the school conducts an evaluation or provides notice that it will not conduct an evaluation and explains the reasons why. The multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET) reviews the results and other available information and helps explain the needs your child has based on the evaluation.

Determine Eligibility

A school support team called the individualized education program (IEP) team determines whether your child is eligible for special education services based on your child's needs and state eligibility criteria. Your input is considered, as you are a member of the IEP team.

Develop the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The IEP is a document developed by you and the school support team (the IEP team). The IEP document states the goals set for your child and states the services the school district will provide. Learn more about IEPs for students who are deaf or hard of hearing by contacting WA Hands & Voices' Guide By Your Side Program.

Placement in an Educational Setting

Your child is placed in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means your child will participate in a general education setting with peers without disabilities as much as possible. (For DHH students LRE may be different based on the communication needs of the student.)

Provide Specialized Instruction

Your child will receive instruction to best help him or her make progress toward educational goals, based on the identified needs.

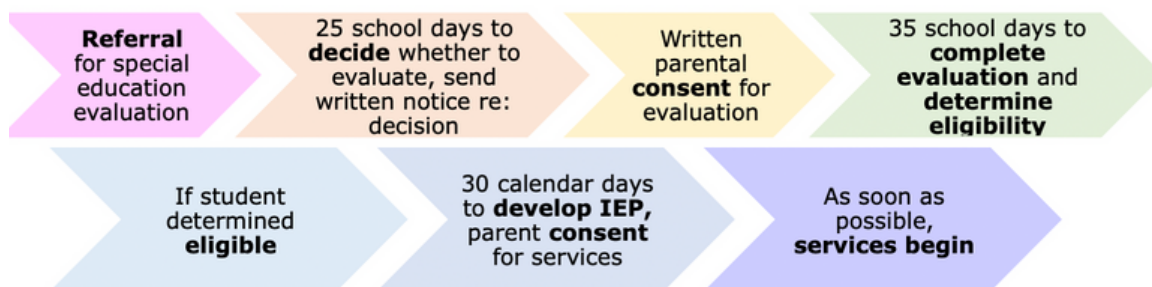
Measure Results

The school keeps track of how your child is doing in meeting his or her educational goals. Results are reviewed at your child's annual IEP along with regular reports of progress on goals and objectives.

Review the IEP and Make Changes as Needed

The IEP team, including you, meets at least once per year to review the IEP. Your child's progress and needs are examined as your child continues to grow, and the team makes appropriate updates to the IEP. Parents can also request an IEP at any time. It is best to put this request in writing.

Timelines for Referral, Initial Evaluation, and Initial Individualized Education Program (IEP)



Resources

[Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)
[Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\)](#)
[OSPI Guidance and Timelines](#)
[US Department of Education](#)
[Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of hearing](#)