



School Evaluations – Know Your Rights

What is an evaluation?

An evaluation is a test or series of tests that show your child's abilities. Before an Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be made, your child must be evaluated. This is done by the New York City Department of Education (DOE). The goal of the evaluation is to make sure each child's IEP fits the child's needs.

How do I get my child evaluated?

You ask for the evaluation by sending a letter to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) at your child's school. A sample letter can be found at the end of this document or downloaded from http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/education/sample_request_referral.doc. Save a copy of the letter for your records! ***If there are specific tests you want for your child, make sure you ask for them in the letter.***

How do I find the right CSE?

The CSE depends on your school district. If you don't know your school district, go to <http://schools.nyc.gov/schoolsearch/> and enter your address. If you know your district or your child is in a charter school, you can find your CSE information at the end of this fact sheet.

What kind of tests can I ask for?

If your child is struggling, it is a good idea to get several tests done. This will help you learn all about your child's needs. Some common evaluations are:

- psychiatric
- neuropsychological
- psychoeducational
- speech and language
- occupational
- visual
- hearing

You may be asked for verification from a doctor before the DOE will agree to do an evaluation.

What happens after I send the letter?

First, they will explain the plan and what tests they want to do. Next, they will ask you to give them permission in writing by sending you a consent letter that you have to sign and date. You should keep a copy of this letter and keep track of when you mailed it. Once you have agreed, the evaluations can begin.

Even if you do not ask for an evaluation, the school may think your child needs one. If this happens, you will be notified by the school. The school will still need your consent. If you agree, then the process continues normally.

After the DOE receives my consent, when will they do the evaluations?

The DOE must complete all evaluations **within 60 days** of receiving your consent.

How long do the evaluations take?

The time it takes to do the evaluations depends on how many tests are being done.

What happens after the evaluation?

If your child is found to have special needs, then there will be an IEP meeting. At this meeting, you and the school district will make the plan for your child. Parents or guardians have a right to see their child's evaluation results before the meeting. Ask the school or DOE for a copy ahead of the meeting. After the meeting, the IEP will be made. You have the right to a free written copy of the IEP.

How often can I ask for my child to be evaluated?

Every child with an IEP must be evaluated at least every three years. This is called a **triennial evaluation**. The DOE must perform the triennial unless you agree in writing not to do it. You can also ask for a new evaluation at any time. You do this by sending a letter to the DOE. If you want more than one evaluation in a year, the DOE must agree to it. If someone wants to change your child's services or if your child is not learning at the speed you expect, it is a good idea to get a new evaluation. The school must also do a new evaluation if they want to stop the special education services.

What if I'm not happy with the evaluation?

If you disagree with evaluation results, you can get an **independent educational evaluation**. To do this, write a letter to your child's school or the DOE. If they agree with your request, the DOE will pay for an evaluator. However, you will have to find the evaluator yourself. If the DOE refuses, they have to show that their evaluations were adequate. They do so by filing for an impartial hearing. A lawyer can help you with the hearing process.

Sample Referral Letter (from NYC.gov)

To: New York City Department of Education

Date:

Committee on Special Education, District # ____
Address
Attention: CSE Chair
School-Based Support Team, PS/MS ____

Re: Name of Child
Child's DOB

To whom it may concern:

I am the parent/guardian of (*Name of Child*), who is enrolled at _____ . I am writing to refer (*Child's first name*) for evaluation of eligibility for special education.

(Indicate if there is a specific concern. Example: I am concerned that (*Child's name*) may be having particular difficulty with reading.)

I understand that special education is voluntary, and my consent will be required in writing to perform evaluations to determine whether my child is eligible for services, and again to begin providing any recommended services.

My mailing address is _____ and my daytime telephone number is _____.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this referral.

Very truly yours,

(Your name)

Committees on Special Education

CSE 1

For Districts: 7,9,10
Fordham Plaza,7th Floor, Bronx, NY 10458
Phone: (718) 329-8001; Fax: (718) 741-7928/7929
Chairperson: Steven Birkeland

CSE 2

For Districts: 8,11,12
3450 East Tremont Ave., 2nd Floor, Bronx, NY 10465
Phone: (718) 794-7420 Español: (718) 794-7490; Fax: (718) 794-744
Chairperson: Tricia DeVito

CSE 3

For Districts: 25,26
30-48 Linden Place, Flushing, NY 11354
Phone: (718) 281-3461; Fax: (718) 281-3478
Chairperson: Esther Morell

CSE 3

For Districts: 28,29
90-27 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, NY 11435
Phone: (718) 557-2553; Fax: (718) 557-2620/2510
Chairperson: Esther Morell

CSE 4

For Districts: 24, 30
28-11 Queens Plaza N., 5th Floor, Long Island City, NY 11101
Phone: (718) 391-8405; Fax: (718) 391-8556
Chairperson: Chris Cinicola

CSE 4

For District: 27
Satellite Office 82-01 Rockaway Blvd. 2nd Floor, Ozone Park, NY 11416
Phone: (718) 642-5715; Fax:(718) 642-5891
Chairperson: Chris Cinicola

CSE 5

For Districts: 19, 23, 32
1665 St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11233
Phone: (718) 240-3557/3558; Fax: (718) 240-3555
Chairperson: Geraldine Beauvil

CSE 6

For Districts: 17, 18, 22
5619 Flatlands Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11234
Phone: (718) 968-6200; Fax: (718) 968-6253
Chairperson: Arlene Rosenstock

CSE 7

For Districts: 20, 21
415 89th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11209
Phone: (718) 759-4900; Fax: (718) 759-4970
Chairperson: Amine Haddad

CSE 7

For District: 31
715 Ocean Terrace, Building A, Staten Island, NY 10301
Phone: (718) 420-5790; Fax: (718) 420-5787
Chairperson: Amine Haddad

CSE 8

For Districts: 13, 14, 15, 16
131 Livingston Street, 4th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201
Phone: (718) 935-4900; Fax: (718) 935-5167
Chairperson: Cherry Kang

CSE 9

For Districts: 1, 2, 4
333 7th Avenue, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10001
Phone: (917) 339-1600; Fax: (917) 339-1450
Chairperson: Nicholas Chavarria

CSE 10

For Districts: 3, 5, 6
388 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027
Phone: (212) 342-8300; Fax: (212) 342-8427
Chairperson: Jane O'Connor

Charter Schools

All Districts
One Fordham Plaza, 7th Floor, Bronx, NY 10458
Phone: (718) 329-8001; Fax: (718) 741-7928/7929
Chairperson: Mariama Sandi

**DISCLAIMER: This fact sheet gives general information
for NYC residents; it is NOT legal advice.**