

The Planning and Placement Team Process

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Issue

Describe the events that must happen during the Planning and Placement Team process that determines a student's eligibility for special education services.

Summary

Special education is mandated by both state statutes and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Special education laws establish broad requirements that school districts identify children with disabilities that affect their educational performance and provide them with a “free and appropriate public education” tailored to their individual needs. The laws also impose procedural requirements for implementing the overarching mandate.

When a child is referred for special education in Connecticut, the school district must convene a planning and placement team (PPT) to determine whether the child requires special education. State law details steps that must take place during the PPT process ([CGS §§ 10-76d](#) and [10-76ff](#)).

For additional information on special education in Connecticut, see [The Department of Education's Parent's Guide](#).

Special Education Process

1. A parent, guardian, school personnel, or other appropriate person (such as a physician or social worker) refers the child for special education.
 - a. A referral is a written request that the school district where the child attends school evaluate whether he is eligible for and needs special education.

2. When the school receives the referral, the district must convene a PPT to review the referral and determine whether the child requires special education or needs to be evaluated further.
 - a. Parents and guardians must receive at least five schools days' prior written notice of PPT meetings.
 - b. Parents and guardians have a right to participate in PPT meetings and have advisors present.
 - c. Parents and guardians must give informed written consent for an evaluation to take place.
 - d. The PPT's evaluation of the child must be comprehensive enough to determine all his special education and related service needs.
3. The PPT, as part of an initial evaluation, if appropriate, and as part of any reevaluations, must review existing evaluation data on the child, including evaluations and information provided by the parent, guardian, or child; classroom-based assessments and observations; and teacher and related services provider observations. The evaluation must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies.
4. The PPT evaluation then determines:
 - a. whether the child has a particular category of disability, or in the case of a reevaluation, whether the child continues to have such a disability;
 - b. the child's present levels of performance and educational needs;
 - c. whether the child needs special education and related services, or in the case of a reevaluation, whether the child continues to need special education and related services;
 - d. whether the child is able to be served within the regular education program with existing supplemental services available in the school district; and
 - e. whether any changes to the special education and related services are needed to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the child's individualized education program and to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.
5. The school district must notify the child's parent or guardian of the PPT evaluation decision and the reasons for it, and the parent's or guardian's right to request an assessment to determine whether the child continues to be a child requiring special education and related services.
 - a. The school district is not required to conduct an assessment unless requested to do so by the child's parent or guardian.

6. After a child is determined eligible for special education, a team of school professionals and the parents must meet to write an individualized education program for the child.
7. A parent who disagrees with the results of the PPT's evaluation can ask for an independent educational evaluation (IEE) of their child by someone who does not work for the school district.
 - a. The school system must either pay for the IEE or prove to a state special education due process hearing officer in an appeal that its own evaluation is appropriate.
 - b. A school district may not refuse to evaluate a child or pay for an IEE because of insufficient funds.
 - c. A school district must give a list of qualified independent evaluators to parents who request an IEE for their child.
8. If the state hearing officer finds the district's evaluation is appropriate, parents may still obtain an IEE for their child at their own expense and submit the findings and recommendations to the PPT.
 - a. Regardless of who pays for an IEE, the PPT is required only to consider the IEE's results. It need not implement them.
 - b. A parent who objects to the PPT's decisions may appeal through the state special education hearing process and, if still dissatisfied, to the courts.

AD:cmg