

The evaluation process gathers the information that will be used to determine if your child needs special education and, if so, the types of programs and services needed. Your child may be evaluated by a school psychologist. Other evaluations may include tests by a hearing specialist for a child with a hearing problem, or an evaluation from a doctor for a child with a health concern. The evaluation must also include input from a therapist if certain services, called “related services,” may be needed. An example is speech therapy (for speech and language) or occupational therapy (for fine motor and other skills).

A child may be referred for the first (or initial) evaluation in different ways:

- **You may ask your school to evaluate your child for special education at any time.** This can be done by sending a letter to the principal of your child’s school or by asking a school professional employee. It is recommended that you keep a record of your written or verbal request. A “Permission to Evaluate–Evaluation Request” form will be sent to you within 10 calendar days after the receipt of your request.
- **The school may also contact you and must ask permission to have your child evaluated using a “Permission to Evaluate–Consent” form.** You must consent in writing to your child’s evaluation. School officials cannot proceed without your written permission. If permission is not received and the school continues to find that an evaluation is necessary, they may ask for a due process hearing and get approval from an impartial hearing officer to evaluate your child. More information about due process hearings is found in Chapter 4 of this guide.

The types of tests that are used in the evaluation process depend upon the educational needs of your child. In most cases, your child may be given several tests to help find strengths and needs. Someone other than your child’s general classroom teacher may also observe your child in class. Part of the evaluation includes the parents’ knowledge of their child. Information that you share about your child is very important and must also be included in the evaluation.