

Sharing Your Child's New Diagnosis with School

Next Steps for Support and Success

As you learn more about your child's diagnosis and needs, you might be concerned or relieved, worried or frustrated. Like all families, you want your child to thrive and succeed. What can you do with this new medical information to help your child at school?

If your child does not have help at school:

If your child's school does not know about the disability, this new information could help you and the school figure out:

- If your child needs special supports
- What those supports would be

You can ask the school to evaluate for special education (IEP) and/or disability accommodations (504 Plan). You can start this conversation with a teacher but make your request in writing. The information from your child's doctor or specialist can help with this process, but the school or district will want to conduct their own evaluation to know how this disability affects the student at school.

Remember:

- 1) Your child does not need a diagnosis for you to ask for an evaluation
- 2) Having a diagnosis of a disability (e.g., autism, dyslexia, ADHD) does not mean that your child will qualify automatically for special education services.

Sample Letter to Request Evaluation

Dear _____
(Principal or Special
Education Supervisor):

I am requesting that the school district evaluate _____
(student's name) for special services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

I am concerned about the student for the following reasons:

(Child's name) has been identified as having (name of disability) by (name of professional). Enclosed is a copy of the report(s) I have received that explains (child's name) condition.

Thank you for your prompt attention to my concerns. If you have any questions, please call me at _____.

Sincerely,

If your child already has an IEP or 504 Plan:

If you already have some disability supports for your child at school, ask yourself:

- How will this new information help my child's school understand his or her needs better?
- Is my child's current IEP or 504 plan working? Is more needed? Less? What changes, if any, would help?

Your team will not automatically receive this new information from your doctor. Share the information if you want them to have it. Request to meet in person to ask questions, provide more details, and make a plan for the future. The team might decide that they need additional information or testing before making changes to your child's plan.



Sample Letter to Request Further Evaluation

Dear (IEP or 504 Team):

My child ____ was recently seen by _____ for a __ (kind of evaluation or treatment).

I believe this report includes important information about how my child is currently affected by his/her disability or disabilities at school.

Please share a copy of this report with the school psychologist and other members of my child's IEP or 504 team.

I would like to discuss this report with the team as soon as possible. Specifically, I would like the team to consider the recommendation for _____.

Based on this report, and recent observations of how my child is doing at school, I believe my child may need further evaluation in the area of _____.

I can be available for a team meeting on the following dates/times:

Sincerely,



Quick Tips

- The school will not get this medical information unless you provide it. You must also give your consent before your child can be evaluated or receive services. You have many choices to make along the way.
- A new diagnosis does not have to mean that your child will change schools or even change classrooms. Our laws value students' inclusion in regular classrooms as much as possible.
- Communicate with your child's school and share what is important to you and what you expect. Be open and honest.
- Collaboration helps everyone. Ask for time to share what you see for your child's future. Involve your child in sharing his or her hopes with the team at school.
- Keep track of important deadlines for the school to respond to you.
- Medical records that you share become part of your child's school records. Talk to your doctor or an ombuds if you have concerns about sensitive information.
- Reach out for support and information when you need it. None of us can do this alone. There is so much to know and learn.

Who Gets the Letter?

Send the letter to educators and school leaders who have the power to make these decisions:



Classroom Teacher
School Counselor or
Psychologist
Principal
Special Education Supervisor
(District)

Check Out:

NICHY's
"Communicating with
Your Child's School
Through Letter Writing":

http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/pa9.pdf

Track the District's Response

5 SCHOOL
DAYS:

Check for a
response

25 SCHOOL
DAYS:

For district to
respond to
evaluation
request

35 SCHOOL
DAYS:

For district to
evaluate (if they
agreed)

For more tools to
support students with
disabilities:

<http://oeo.wa.gov/education-issues-topics/special-education/>

Find us online: oeo.wa.gov
Email us: oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov
Connect with us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/WAEducationOmbuds/>
Call us: 866-297-2597
Phone interpretation is available.

Washington State
Governor's Office of the
**Education
Ombuds**

We listen. We inform. We help solve problems.