

parent guide for special education

What is special education?

Special education supports students with one of 13 types of disabilities that affect how they learn. The federal government funds this program through a law called IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). Children can receive these services from birth until age 21. Schools must provide these services in general education classrooms as much as possible. To qualify for special education, your child must go through a formal test by the school.

How can special education help my child?

Children in special education receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This plan is tailored to your child's learning needs. It helps your child learn at their level and get support in and out of the classroom. The plan can include changes to schoolwork, extra help, and other services your child needs to succeed in school and participate in activities with other kids.

How do I ask for special education services?

1. Write down your concerns and ask the school to evaluate your child.
2. A team from your child's school (teacher, administrator, counselor, and special education staff) will meet to discuss about your request.

Timeline After You Ask for Services

- **Within 15 school days:** The school must either deny the request or ask for your permission to evaluate your child.
- **Within 45 school days after you agree:** The school must complete the evaluation.
- **Within 30 calendar days after evaluation:** The school must hold a meeting (called ARD) to share results and create an IEP.
- **Right after the IEP is signed:** Services for your child will begin.

What if I don't agree with the school's decision?

Write down your concerns. At the IEP meeting (ARD), you can check the box to show you disagree. To learn more, read the Procedural Safeguard booklet for parents:

<https://www.spedtex.org/index.cfm/parent-resources/procedural-safeguards/>

Examples of Support Your Child Might Receive

Accommodations

Accommodations help your child learn the regular curriculum and participate in school activities with other kids their age. They can be part of a 504 plan or an IEP.

Physical

- Water breaks
- Snacks
- Wearing extra clothing

Behavior

- *Seat near teacher*
- *Coping strategies*
- *Breaks*
- *Calm/cool down space*

Accessibility

- *Bathroom pass*
- *Elevator pass*
- *Extra set of books at home*
- *Help around the school*

Modifications

Modifications adjust schoolwork to match your child's learning level. Your child will have goals and a plan to reach them. Modifications may apply to one class or all classes. These modifications are outlined in your child's individual education plan (IEP).

Reading / Language Arts

- *Vocabulary Comprehension*
- *Reading fluency*
- *Finding details*

Math

- *Math fact fluency*
- *Support in subject areas (e.g., algebra, geometry)*
- *Measurement skills*

Behavioral

- *Reducing outburst*
- *Completing tasks*

Related Services

Related services are additional supports that help your child succeed in school.

Speech / Language Services

- *Pronouncing letters*
- *Expressive language*
- *Receptive language*
- *Using a communication device*

Occupational / Physical Therapy

- *Handwriting*
- *Using technology to write*
- *Sensory support*

Other Services

- *Support for visually impaired*
- *Autism support*
- *Counseling*

More Resources

- **SpedTex – Special Education Info Center**
spedtex.org/
- **Texas Project First – Family Support**
texasprojectfirst.org/
- **Texas Education Agency – Special Education**
tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education

Need help from Children's Health school services?

If your child is a patient at Children's HealthSM, you may contact the School Services Department.

- **Dallas Campus:** 214-456-7733
- **Plano Campus:** 469-303-4418

SCHOOL SERVICES

For more information, visit childrens.com/school-services

