



How to Request a Special Education Evaluation

(Bison Bridge Behavioral Insights Parent Resource — K–12 Edition)



What Is a Special Education Evaluation?

A special education evaluation is the formal process schools use to determine whether a child qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Evaluations assess a student’s cognitive, academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and/or functional skills. The goal is to identify whether a disability is impacting their ability to learn and if specially designed instruction is needed.

 **Before requesting a formal evaluation, it’s helpful to ask:**

- What interventions or supports are already in place?
- Has the school used data or observations to address concerns?
- Are there classroom strategies, MTSS interventions, or accommodations being tried?

Requesting an evaluation should not be the first step — but it is an appropriate next step if your child is not making progress, continues to struggle despite support, or you suspect a disability that needs deeper investigation.



Step-by-Step: How to Request an Evaluation

1. Put Your Request in Writing

You have the right to request a special education evaluation **at any time**. While you can speak to your child’s teacher or counselor, it’s best to follow up in writing so your request is officially documented.



Include:

- Your child's full name and grade
- The reason for your request (academic, behavioral, emotional concerns, etc.)
- A statement requesting a formal evaluation for special education services

You can send your letter or email to the principal, school psychologist, or special education coordinator.

2. The School Must Respond Promptly

After receiving your written request, the school must respond **within a reasonable timeframe** (typically within 10 school days in Kansas). They must:

- Either begin the process by requesting your **written consent** to evaluate, or
- Provide a **prior written notice** explaining why they are refusing your request

⚠ The school **cannot ignore your request** or delay indefinitely.

3. Give Written Consent for Evaluation

The school cannot begin testing until you sign a formal consent form. Once you sign:

- The school has **60 school days** to complete the evaluation and hold a meeting to review the results

4. Be Involved in the Process

Parents are important members of the team. You can:

- Share outside reports or observations
- Ask what tools or assessments will be used
- Stay in contact during the process

5. Attend the Eligibility Meeting

Once testing is complete, the school will invite you to a meeting to review the results. The team will decide whether your child qualifies under one of the 13 IDEA disability categories and whether they need special education services.



Sample Letter



Dear [Principal or Special Education Coordinator],

I am the parent of [Child's Full Name], who is in [Grade] at [School Name]. I am writing to formally request that my child be evaluated for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

I have concerns about [brief explanation: academic progress, attention, behavior, speech, etc.], and I believe a comprehensive evaluation is needed to better understand and support their needs.

Please consider this my formal written request to begin the evaluation process. I appreciate your prompt response.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Contact Information]

What Parents Say

- "I didn't realize I could ask — I thought I had to wait for the school."
- "Once I put it in writing, things moved quickly."
- "The evaluation helped everyone understand what my child really needed."

Important Reminder

You do not need to wait for the school to act. If you believe your child may have a disability, you can **initiate the evaluation process at any time**. That said, it's helpful to ask first what the school is already doing and consider evaluation as a next step when concerns persist.

You are a key part of the team — and your voice matters.

For more support, visit www.ksde.org or contact your local special education office.