

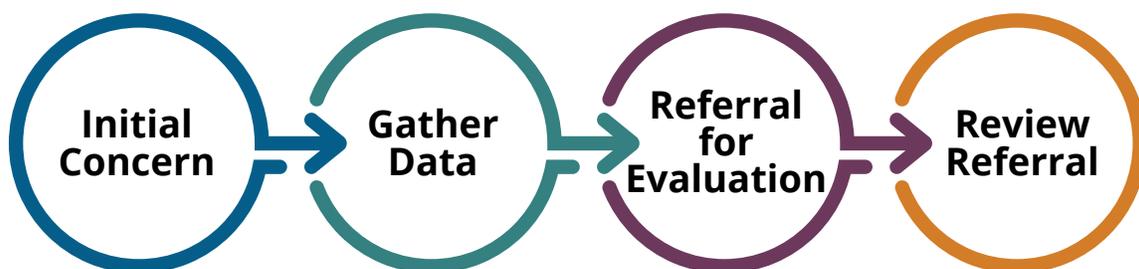
Understanding the Special Education Referral Process:

Steps to Support

The Special Education Referral Process helps ensure students with unique needs get the support they need to succeed. When a child struggles academically, socially, or emotionally, this process identifies if special education services can help. It involves collaboration between parents, teachers, and other professionals to assess the child's needs and determine the best steps forward, providing targeted support and services as needed.

Breaking Down the Process

- **Initial Concern:** An adult in the student's family, a medical provider, or the student's school (private, charter, or school district) notices that a child is struggling academically and/or socially.
- **Gather Data:** The adult with the concern helps to gather relevant data and information such as documentation from medical providers, school, or personal observations.
- **Referral for Evaluation:** The parent, charter, or school district requests an evaluation either verbally or in writing.
- **Review of Referral:** The charter school or school district, also known as a Local Education Agency (LEA), reviews the referral and supporting documentation to determine if there is sufficient evidence to warrant an evaluation.
- **Provide Interventions:** If the child already attends as a general education student, the school will provide interventions first before moving forward with a referral.



During the review of referral, the LEA team discusses the request and decides based on the information provided whether to pursue evaluation or refuse evaluation.

Scenario A: Pursue Evaluation

Parental Consent: Schools obtain written consent from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation.

Evaluation: Conduct assessments within 45 school days from consent to determine the child's strengths, needs, and eligibility for special education services.

Eligibility Meeting: Hold a meeting with the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), teachers, and specialists to discuss evaluation results and determine eligibility.

Develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP): If eligible, a team will meet consisting of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), teachers, and school representative members. This is called the IEP team. The members of the IEP team may change as needs arise. A parent is welcome to invite any individual to the meeting. This could include another caregiver, a teacher in a private program, or a parent advocate. The IEP team will create a plan tailored to the child's needs.

IEP Implementation: The school provides the services and support outlined in the IEP.

Progress Monitoring: The IEP team will periodically review the child's progress and adjust the IEP as needed.

Annual Review: Conduct an annual review of the IEP to ensure it continues to meet the child's needs.

Scenario B: Refuse Evaluation

Written Notice: If the LEA decides not to proceed with the evaluation, they must provide the parents with a written notice that includes:

- The reason(s) for the decision.
- A description of the information that was used to make the decision.
- An explanation of the parents' rights, including the right to request a due process hearing or file a complaint with the state education agency.

Parental Rights

Parents have the right to challenge the decision through a [dispute resolution process](#). There are six options that dispute resolution process covers, including:

IEP Facilitation

Mediation

Resolution Meeting

**Written State
Complaint**

**Due Process
Complaint/Hearing
Request**

**Expedited Hearing
Request**

For support through this process, visit the [Utah Parent Center](#).

Call: 1(800)-468-1160

Email: info@utahparentcenter.org