



Requesting an Initial Evaluation for Special Education Services

For families and for personal reference

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from the Center for Parent Information and Resources

Available online at: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/evaluation-2/>

*From our series of model letters...because sometimes
you need to communicate with the school
about your child's education.*

There are times when you, as a parent, may want to communicate in writing with your child's school about some problem or concern with your child's education or well-being. This brief presents a model letter or email you might write the school to *ask that your child be evaluated* to see if he or she has a disability and is eligible to receive special education and related services.

When would I request an evaluation for special education services?

If your child has been consistently struggling in school, his or her problems may be due to a disability. If the school thinks your child may have a disability, they will contact you to request your written permission to evaluate your child. Under the IDEA (the nation's special education law), you also have the right to ask the school to evaluate your child. The purpose of the evaluation is to see if he or she has a disability and needs special education services. This evaluation is free of charge.

For more information on evaluation, visit our evaluation pages online, at:

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/evaluation/>

If your child has been identified by your doctor or other professionals as having a disability, you will want to include this information in your letter to the school. You should also provide copies of any reports you have received that explain your child's condition.

If you decide to write the school and ask that your child be evaluated, the model letter below provides an example of what you may want to say.

General Letter-Writing Tips

When writing any business letter, it is important to keep it short and to the point. First, start by asking yourself the following questions and state the answers in your letter:

- Why am I writing?
- What are my specific concerns?

- What are my questions?
- What would I like the person to do about this situation?
- What sort of response do I want: a letter, a meeting, a phone call, or something else?

Each letter you write should include the following basic information:

- Put the date on your letter.
- Give your child’s full name and the name of your child’s main teacher or current class placement.
- Say what you want, rather than what you don’t want. Keep it simple.
- Give your address and a daytime phone number where you can be reached.
- Always end your letter with a “thank you.”

What are some other tips to keep in mind?

You want to make a good impression so that the person reading your letter will understand your request and say “yes.” Remember, this person may not know you, your child, or your child’s situation. Keep the tone of your letter pleasant and businesslike. Give the facts without letting anger, frustration, blame, or other negative emotions creep in. Some letter-writing tips include:

- After you write your first draft, put the letter aside for a day or two. Then look at it again and revise it with fresh eyes.
- Read your letter as though you are the person receiving it. Is your request clear? Have you included the important facts? Does your letter ramble on and on? Is it likely to offend, or is the tone businesslike?
- Have someone else read your letter for you. Is your reason for writing clear? Can the reader tell what you are asking for? Would the reader say “yes” if he or she received this letter? Can your letter be improved?
- Use spell check and grammar check on the computer. Or ask someone reliable to edit your letter before you send it.
- **Keep a copy for your records.**



Highly Rated Resource! This resource was reviewed by 3-member panels of Parent Center staff working independently from one another to rate the quality, relevance, and usefulness of CPIR resources. This resource was found to be of “High Quality, High Relevance, High Usefulness” to Parent Centers.

Model Letter

Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
Daytime telephone number

Name of person to whom you're writing
Title
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear *(Person's name)*,

I am writing to request that my son/daughter, *(child's name)*, be evaluated for special education services. I am worried that *(child's name)* is not doing well in school and believe he/she may need special services in order to learn. *(Child's name)* is in the (_) grade at *(name of school)*. *(Teacher's name)* is his/her teacher.

Specifically, I am worried, because *(child's name)* does/does not *(give a few direct examples of your child's problems at school)*.

We have tried the following to help *(child's name)*: *(If you or the school have done anything extra to help your child, briefly state it here)*.

I understand that I have to give written permission in order for *(child's name)* to be evaluated. Before the evaluation begins, I have some questions about the process that I need to have answered *(list any questions you may have)*.

I would be happy to talk with you about *(child's name)*. You can send me information or call me during the day at *(daytime telephone number)*. Thank you for your prompt attention to my request.

Sincerely,

(Your name)

cc: the principal, supervisor, or special education administrator
other members of the meeting

**Note:* The "cc:" at the bottom of the letter means you are sending a copy of your letter to the people listed after the cc.