

Parent Information: Special Education Eligibility Meetings

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS PREPARE FOR AND EXPECT AT A SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY MEETING?

The Eligibility Conference:

Often, parents attending their first Special Education Eligibility Conference are surprised by the number of school professionals in the room. This can be intimidating, but parents should be aware that each individual in the room has some special input regarding the student, and is present with the student's best interest in mind. The Domain Review Meeting, held prior to the Eligibility Meeting, dictates which professionals attend, in correlation to the evaluations deemed necessary.

At The Meeting:

At most Eligibility Conferences, a school psychologist, school social worker, general education teacher, and a representative from school administration (or designee) will be present. For students who had evaluations completed for speech and language, a speech pathologist will also be present. For students with motor-skills needs, an occupational (fine motor) or physical (gross motor) therapist will be present. All specialists will explain the results of their evaluations and observations.

The Parent's Role:

The parent is an equal member of the special education team, having unique knowledge and helpful information about the child. It can be uncomfortable for parents to have so many individuals reporting about their child. If at any time, a parent does not understand what is being presented, asking team members for clarification is expected and encouraged. After the professionals have completed the presentation of their findings, eligibility will be determined per the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* guidelines. The school psychologist will lead the discussion of the criteria for the disabling conditions under which students may become eligible for services. If the student is eligible, the way in which the disabling condition affects the student's ability to learn will be discussed and documented. Additionally, a discussion and documentation of the student's unique educational needs will take place.

Giving Consent for Placement in Special Education:

If a student is found eligible for special education services, the parent will be asked to sign consent in order for the student to receive the recommended services.

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