10 STEPS TO THE IEP



1 Child special education identification

A child is identified via the "Child Find" system or a parent/teacher referral. Parental consent is required before the evaluation begins.

2 Child evaluation

A full evaluation determines the child's specific needs. If you disagree with the school's results, you have the right to request an external evaluation.

3 Child eligibility decision

A team reviews the results to see if the child qualifies under IDEA. You can appeal if you disagree with the decision.

4 Child is found eligible for disability services

If eligible, a team must meet within 30 days to begin creating the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

5 IEP Meeting scheduled

The school sets a time and location. Parents are encouraged to attend and may bring an advocate or anyone with knowledge of the child.

6 IEP Meeting & IEP written

The team collaborates on the written plan. Services cannot start until a parent provides written consent.

7 Disability & Special Education services provided

The school implements the IEP exactly as written. All teachers and providers are briefed on their specific responsibilities.

8 Progress measured & parent reports

The school tracks progress toward goals and sends reports to parents as often as they do for students without disabilities.

9 IEP plan reviewed

The IEP is reviewed annually. Parents can suggest changes at any time and have the right to evaluation if necessary.

10 Child re-evaluated

Every three years, the child is re-evaluated to see if they still qualify for services and to update their learning plan.



Learn more at https://www.parentcenterhub.org/steps/

Guiding Hands, a free toolkit from The ABLE Foundation. Made by Eugene Choi. ABLEtheFoundation.org/guiding-hands

General information, not legal advice. Rules differ by state; see your school's procedural safeguards notice. Reviewed October 2026.