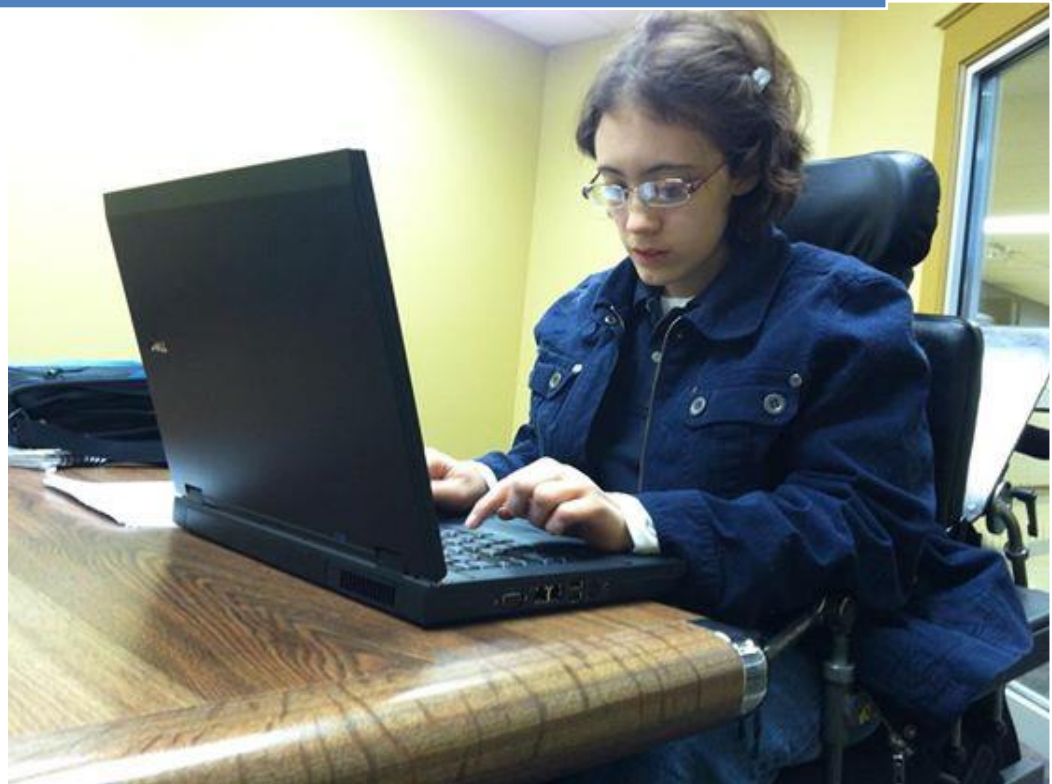


Sample Letters & When to Write Them



 **LifeLine**

Compiled 2016

Sample Letters & When To Write Them

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Reviewing Your Child's Records

You should know what is in the records the school system keeps on your child. You should review your child's education records, know what is in the files, and have a copy of these records at home. Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), you have a right to know where all your child's records are maintained. Additionally, you have a right to request that all your child's records be brought to one location to enable you to view all of your child's records. If you need to have a copy of your child's records to enable you to thoroughly review them, you have a right to a copy of all those records. It is wise to review your child's records on at least an annual basis. Remember, anything that the school system maintains or creates about your child is a "record" under FERPA, and you have a right to know that it exists, view it and have a copy of it. That includes such things as all evaluations (including observations), IEPs, meeting minutes (before they are typed), all disciplinary records including in-school suspensions. Additionally, it includes even teacher's notes and test protocols. If it is a record, you have a right to access to it. It is a wise parent who exercises these rights! Remember, knowledge is power! The more informed you are about your son or daughter, the more enabled you are to be an equal participant at your child's education planning meetings.

If you have never looked at the education records, use the next page as a guide. Don't forget to get a copy of the information that you need to make your home file complete.

Use this form as a guide to help you look at your child's school files/record.

Items to note for record review

Child: _____ **School:** _____

Age: _____ **Grade/Program:** _____

Date records requested: _____ **Date school answered:** _____

Date records reviewed: _____ **School staff present:** _____

Number of files reviewed (and names, locations)

Record Review

_____ Is identifying date (names, ages, etc.) correct and up to date?

_____ Are evaluations current (no more than three years old)?

_____ Do the evaluations reflect strengths as well as weaknesses, and recommendations?

_____ Do the evaluations provide information for programming such as recommendations or do they simply give numerical scores?

Do the records include

_____ psychological evaluations

_____ PT Evaluations

_____ OT evaluations

_____ Speech/Language evaluations

_____ academic achievement reports

_____ standardized achievement reports

_____ Current and past IEPs

_____ Medical records (if necessary)

_____ Behavioral records such as evaluations, behavior incident reports, suspensions (in school as well as out of school)

_____ Vocational evaluation (interest, skills, aptitude)

_____ Parent letter and comments that you have requested they put in your child's file

_____ other _____

Date record corrections requested _____

Date approved/denied _____

Copies requested _____

Date received _____

Keeping Your Own Records

Good record keeping is an important step in making sure your child receives an appropriate education. You should keep records to document your requests for service, services provided, evaluations, and any other information concerning your child's special needs. This includes observations of your child's behavior and development at home, at play, with friends and relatives, in school or any other situation. It means keeping written notes of when you are contacted by a professional or when you telephone, write or visit with a medical, educational, or other professional.

- Start keeping a notebook listing the names, addresses, phone numbers of people you contact. Write down the questions you ask and answers you receive.
- Keep a copy of all of your child's school records in the book
- Keep copies of all letters you write to school personnel, advocates and other people involved with your child.
- Put as much in writing as you can and ask others to do the same.
- Get copies of your child's educational rights including getting the school system's discipline policies, getting the school system's "Rights and Responsibilities" brochure as well as their 504 plan and rights and their ADA plan and rights. Get other records of rights such as state law and rules, federal laws, procedures, etc.

Writing down every step you take to get your child the service he needs can be the evidence which finally makes change happen! It will be to your advantage to keep accurate records of whom you spoke to, when you spoke with him, what s/he said, how long you waited between question and the answer, will be to your advantage. Keep a "telephone log" of calls. Follow up requests and agreements with a letter. Email counts as written correspondence as well since there are time and date stamps attached.

Keeping a Home File

No two home files will be alike. We can suggest the types of material that should be kept in your home file, but your child's individual needs will make the content of the file individual. Organize your file in a way that will make it easy for you to find the information. For example, your home file could be organized into sections containing similar type of information (such as IEPs) filed together.

Many school districts require a birth certificate and proof of current immunization before a child can be enrolled in school. These should be the first two items in your home file.

You will probably also need information about current health care and dental care needs. Medical information which relates to your child's educational needs should definitely be included.

You should also include all school records including all forms with your signature, academic achievement reports, evaluations, all individual education programs (IEP's) and in the case of an older child, any vocational assessments that have been done.

In addition, your home file should include samples of your child's work and any other accomplishments which show progress. Examples might include certificates for completing courses such as CPR, letters from employers, certificates of award from competitions, perfect attendance awards, and other items.

Another important section of your home is a communication log. This should include ea page describing any conversation (telephone or in person) with teacher, therapists, school administrator, related service or medical personnel regarding your child. Be sure to date it, and include the name as well as the title of the person you spoke with.

You should also keep a copy of all letters to and from the school system or other agencies involved with your child.

Home File Checklist

Copy of

- Birth certificate
- Immunization records
- Medical records
- School records
 - Academic achievement reports (tests, report cards, transcripts)
 - Psychological evaluations
 - PT, OT, SLP evaluations
 - Current and past IEPs
 - Behavioral/Social evaluations and behavioral incident reports
 - Vocational evaluations (interest, skills, aptitude)
- Samples of child's work and other accomplishments
- Communication logs
- Correspondence
- Other, as you see the need

USING SAMPLE LETTERS

The following are samples of letters that you might need to write to a principal, teacher or other school system staff. Use these letters as a guide or template to help you with your own letter writing. REMEMBER to date and keep a copy of every letter you write.

LETTER WRITING TIPS

Letter writing is a very important part of getting and maintaining good special education services for your child. People remember letters; they may forget a telephone call. And there can be no “misunderstanding” of what you said or requested if that request is in writing.

Requests for services, discussions or problems, questions about programs or services, and documentation of agreements made during meetings should all be done in writing.

Letters do not need to be fancy or typewritten. They must include:

- The date you wrote the letter
- The name and address of the person the letter is written to and his/her title (principal, etc.)
- Your child’s name and some background information
- An explanation of the problem or issue
- Your request
- If documenting a meeting, a list of what you understood to be said or agreed upon
- A “thank you” to the person for help you
- A “time limit” for a response or answer
- Your full name, address, and phone number

And don’t forget to keep a copy. If you can’t find a copy machine (check the post office or library), use carbon paper. Carbons can be used between sheets of paper for either a typewritten or handwritten letter. You can also save copies of documents created in word processors, copy on printers, etc. Save copies of all emails sent as well. It is generally wise to also have a printed copy of digital documents.

WHO DO I WRITE?

If you are documenting a meeting, write the letter to the person who was in charge of the meeting. If you are making a request, write the person who can give you an answer. For example, the classroom teacher can’t tell you why the school system doesn’t offer physical therapy, the person in charge of special education programs can.

If you are trying to solve a problem, write the first letter to the location of the problem. For example, if the problem is in the classroom, you write the teacher; if in the school building, you write the principal; if with the special education program, you write the person in charge of your district’s special education program. If you have not received a response to the first letter in your “time limit”, then write the next letter (with a copy of the first letter enclosed) to the supervisor immediately above the location of the problem.

If you are trying to get testing, a change in your child’s program, or other issues concerning the IEP, write and send a copy of the letter to the special education department.

Don’t forget to keep a copy!

LETTER REQUESTING AN EVALUATION

(Your Name)
(Your Address)
(Date)
(Name of Principal)
(Name of School)
(Address of School)

Dear (Name of Principal)

I am the parent of (name of child). My child is having problems with his/her school work and I feel s/he may have special needs. Please consider this letter as a formal referral for a comprehensive evaluation to see if s/he qualifies for special education and related services. I am available to meet, if needed, to sign any necessary consent to begin the process and to be provided with information regarding procedures and the types evaluations offered by ***(Insert School System Name)*** including an explanation of "Informed Consent" for an Initial Evaluation. Please provide me with any other information I may need.

Please contact me within the next 5 days if you need any further consent and call me if you have any questions. Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent record.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)
(Your Telephone Number)
Copy: (List all the people you are sending copies to.)

Dear Parent/Guardian/Surrogate:

On ____ / ____ / ____ (date), _____ was referred for a comprehensive

assessment for determination of eligibility and need of special educational services. This referral is based upon a review of current classroom performance, past educational records, and/or screening information. We are requesting permission to assess you child in order to provide additional information to help us plan a more effective educational program. Also, as the parent of a child who may be eligible for special education, the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards* brochure is being provided for your information.

The reason(s) to request your permission to assess your child is (are):

- child is working
- above grade level or below grade level in one or more basic skills
- child's behavior is inconsistent with that expected for children of student's age
- child's rate of progress has increased decreased
- child's speech/language skills are inconsistent with those expected for children of student's age
- child has entered our school system with an out of date and/or incomplete evaluation
- parent preschool referral

The areas/ procedures to be considered for your child's assessment are checked below. The extent of the assessment will depend upon the severity of the problem.

- 1. Vision/Hearing Screening
- 2. Classroom Observation
- 3. Academic Achievement
- 4. Intellectual Functioning
- 5. Speech/Language Skills
- 6. Gross/Fine Motor Skills
- 7. Visual/Auditory Skills
- 8. School and/or Home Behaviors
- 9. Early Childhood Development
- 10. Audiological Evaluation
- 11. Functional Vision Assessment
- 12. Personality Assessment
- 13. Vocational Assessment
- 14. Assistive Technology Assessment
- 15. Self-Help/Adaptive Behavior
- 16. Functional Behavior Assessment
- 17. Other _____
- 18. Other _____

Please sign this form and return it to the school. Your signature shall not be construed as consent for placement in any special education program. When the assessment has been completed, you will be invited to an IEP team meeting in order to discuss the findings, determine your child's eligibility for special education services and, if need, plan an appropriate educational program for your child. If you have any information you would like to share pertaining to your child's assessment, please forward it to the person named below or bring it to the meeting.

I HAVE REVIEWED THE BROCHURE CONCERNING *THE NOTICE OF PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS*

- Yes No

Please check one of the following:

- I give permission for an individual assessment. I do not give permission for an individual assessment.

Date ____ / ____ / ____ Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

Phone _____ Address _____

If you have any questions, you may contact one of the following:

Name	Department/Position	Telephone Number
School _____	Teacher _____	

Date Received From Parent ____ / ____ / ____ Grade _____
ED - 3073 - Rev. 8/08
Consent For Initial Assessment

DEPT ED

LETTER REQUESTING AN EVALUATION – School Age

(Your Name)

(Your Address)

(Date)

(Name of Principal)

(Name of School)

(Address of School)

Dear (Name of Principal)

I am the parent of (name of child). My child is having problems with his/her school work and I feel s/he may have special needs. Please consider this letter as a formal referral for a comprehensive evaluation to see if s/he qualifies for special education and related services. I have signed and give informed parental consent on the State form attached and have indicated the evaluations I feel are necessary. I have received and read the brochure "*Rights of Children with Disabilities and Parent Responsibilities*" which was provided by STEP, Inc. Please provide me with any other information. Please contact me within the next 5 days if you need any further consent. Please call me if you have any questions. Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent record.

§300.304 Evaluation procedures.

(a) Notice. The public agency must provide notice to the parents of a child with a disability, in accordance with

§300.503, that describes any evaluation procedures the agency proposes to conduct.

(b) Conduct of evaluation. In conducting the evaluation, the public agency must--

(1) Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining--

(i) Whether the child is a child with a disability under

§300.8; and

(ii) The content of the child's IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities);

(2) Not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child; and

(3) Use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.

(c) Other evaluation procedures. Each public agency must ensure that--

(1) Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this part--

(i) Are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis;

(ii) Are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer;

(iii) Are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable;

(iv) Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and

(v) Are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.

(2) Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

(Your Telephone Number)

Copy: (List all the people you are sending copies to.)

Attachment - Consent for Initial Assessment

LETTER REQUESTING AN EVALUATION – Early Intervention

(Your Name)

(Your Address)

(Date)

(Name of TEIS Coordinator)

(List Your District's Office)

(Address of TEIS office in your county/district)

Dear (Name of Coordinator)

I am the parent of (name of child). My child is having problems with his/her development and I feel s/he may have special needs. Please consider this letter as a formal referral for a comprehensive evaluation to see if s/he qualifies for early intervention services. I have signed and provided informed parental consent on the State form attached. I have indicated the evaluations I feel are necessary. Please provide me with any other information needed to assist TEIS in the evaluation process.

Please contact me within the next 5 days if you need any further consent. Please call me if you have any questions. Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent record.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

(Your Telephone Number)

Copy: (List all the people you are sending copies to.)

Attachment - Consent for Initial Assessment

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING REEVALUATION

(Your Name)
(Your Address)

(Date)

(Name of Principal)
(Name of School)
(Address of School)

Dear (Name of Principal):

I am the parent of (name of child). I feel that my child should be reevaluated (name specific disability areas of concern, if you have them) because

- * his special education evaluation is over three years old;
- * his special needs have changed (illness, accident, improvement, etc.) or,
- * other reason you feel your child should be reevaluated.

Please assist me in scheduling a reevaluation. Please also send me written notice regarding the type of evaluation including the specific name of the test you expect to do as well as the name and credentials of the evaluator you choose. I look forward to hearing from you with the next ten days. Please maintain this request in my child's permanent school record.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Your Telephone Number)

Copy: (List all the people you will send a copy of this letter to.)

Request for a Meeting to Review the IEP

NOTE: The IEP/IFSP defines your child's program. As you know, each year there is a regularly scheduled IEP/IFSP review; however you can request a review whenever you feel changes need to be made in your child's program.

What are some reasons to request an IEP review?

- You may want to request a review if:
- Your child has met one, or several, of the goals written in the IEP/IFSP;
- Your child does not seem to be making any progress toward one, or several of the goals written in the IEP/IFSP;
- You feel additional services should be added in order for your child to progress;
- You feel a service is no longer necessary in order for your child to succeed;
- Your child has experienced major changes, such as illness, surgery, or injury
- You feel like there are issues surrounding your child's education that need to be addressed
- You feel like anything in your child's IEP/IFSP needs to be changed or discussed.

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING AN IEP TEAM MEETING

(Your Name)
(Your Address)

(Date)

(Name of Principal)
(Name of School)
(Address of School)

Dear (Principal):

I am the parent of (child's name). I am requesting an IEP Team be held as soon as possible to review, and revise if necessary, my child's IEP. Please contact me with written notice that specifies when this meeting is scheduled, who will be in attendance and all evaluations that will be used to make any determinations at this IEP Team meeting. I am available to meet at the following days and times:

January 21, after 2:00 p.m.
January 24, after school
January 26, after 5:00 p.m.
January 27, between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Tennessee Law 0520-01-09-.14 Review and revision of the IEP.

Upon written request of any member, the IEP team shall be convened within ten (10) school days to review or revise the IEP or consider the child's placement.

Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent school record. Thank you for your help with this matter.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Your Telephone Number)
Copy: (List all people who will receive a copy of this letter.)

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING AN IFSP TEAM MEETING

(Your Name)
(Your Address)

(Date)

(TEIS Coordinator)
(Address of Your Districts Office)

Dear (TEIS Coordinator):

I am the parent of (child's name). I am requesting an IFSP Team be held as soon as possible to review, and revise if necessary, my child's IFSP. Please contact me with written notice that specifies when this meeting is scheduled, who will be in attendance and all evaluations that will be used to make any determinations at this IFSP Team meeting. I am available to meet at the following days and times:

January 21, after 2:00 p.m.
January 24, after school
January 26, after 5:00 p.m.
January 27, between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent record. Thank you for your help with this matter.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Your Telephone Number)
Copy: (List all people who will receive a copy of this letter.)

REQUEST FOR AN INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION (IEE) AT PUBLIC EXPENSE

What are some reasons for requesting an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense?

It is not uncommon for families to feel that their child may need additional tests or feel that the school's testing results did not accurately describe the child. Parents may want additional medical examinations or may be interested in areas the school staff did not test. You can, therefore, always have your child tested outside the school system.

However, if you expect the school to pay for an IEE, then you will need to request this **BEFORE** any independent testing is done. Some reasons the school may accept financial responsibility for an independent evaluation include:

- The original evaluation was incorrect
- The original evaluation was not done in your child's native language
- The original evaluation was incomplete and additional tests are needed;
- The evaluation could not be done with the needed accommodations, for example, in Braille or administered by someone who signs.

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING AN INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION (IEE)

(Your Name)
(Your Address)

(Date)

(Name of Special Education Supervisor)
(Name of School/office)
(Address of School/office)

Dear (Special Education Supervisor):

I am the parent of (child's name). I disagree with the school system's evaluation of my child. Because I do not agree I am requesting an independent evaluation paid for by the school system. Please send me your written policies regarding independent evaluations.

I am requesting that (Name of Independent Evaluator) do this evaluation and would be happy to make the arrangements for this evaluation.

Or

I am requesting assistance in identifying sources for this evaluation.

I will send you the results. Please contact me in regard to billing instructions.

I look forward to hearing from you within the next 14 days.

Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent school records. Thank you for your help with this matter.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Your Telephone)
Copy: (List all people you will send a copy of this letter to.)

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING RECORDS

(Your Name)
(Your Address)

(Date)

(Name of Principal)
(Name of School)
(Address of School)

Dear (Name of Principal):

I am writing to request a copy of my child, (child's name), special education records.
I am requesting all of his/her records including:

1. All IEPs
2. All evaluation reports and recommendation
3. Integrated assessment reports
4. Behavior reports/observations/grade reports
(optional)
5. All disciplinary records.

Please send me these records by mail as soon as possible.

OR

I will come by the (school office) to pick them up on (date).

Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent school records. Thank you for your help with this matter.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Your Telephone Number)

Copy: (List all people you send a copy of this letter to.)

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING RECORDS WITH LAW

(Your Name)
(Your Address)

(Date)
(Name of Principal)
(Name of School)
(Address of School)

Dear (Name of Principal):

I am writing to request a copy of my child, (child's name), special education records. I am requesting all of his/her records including:

1. All IEPs
2. All evaluation reports and recommendation
3. Integrated assessment reports
4. Behavior reports/observations/grade reports (optional)
5. All disciplinary records.

Please send me these records by mail as soon as possible.

OR

I will come by the (school office) to pick them up on (date).

Please maintain this letter in my child's permanent school records. Thank you for your help with this matter.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)
(Your Telephone Number)
Copy: (List all people you send a copy of this letter to.)

LAW SUPPORTING RECORDS REQUEST

Sec. 300.322 Parent participation.

(a) Public agency responsibility-general. Each public agency must take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a child with a disability are present at each IEP Team meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate, including--

(1) Notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend; and

(2) Scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.

(b) Information provided to parents.

(1) The notice required under paragraph (a)(1) of this section must--

(i) Indicate the purpose, time, and location of the meeting and who will be in attendance; and

(ii) Inform the parents of the provisions in Sec. 300.321(a)(6) and (c) (relating to the participation of other individuals on the IEP Team who have knowledge or special expertise about the child), and Sec. 300.321(f) (relating to the participation of the Part C service coordinator or other representatives of the Part C system at the initial IEP Team meeting for a child previously served under Part C of the Act).

(2) For a child with a disability beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, the notice also must--

(i) Indicate--

(A) That a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals and transition services for the child, in accordance with Sec. 300.320(b); and

(B) That the agency will invite the student; and

(ii) Identify any other agency that will be invited to send a representative.

(c) Other methods to ensure parent participation. If neither parent can attend an IEP Team meeting, the public agency must use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls, consistent with Sec. 300.328 (related to alternative means of meeting participation).

(d) Conducting an IEP Team meeting without a parent in attendance. A meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if the public agency is unable to convince the parents that they should attend. In this case, the public agency must keep a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed on time and place, such as--

(1) Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls;

(2) Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; and

(3) Detailed records of visits made to the parent's home or place of employment and the results of those visits.

(e) Use of interpreters or other action, as appropriate. The public agency must take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the proceedings of the IEP Team meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for parents with deafness or whose native language is other than English.

(f) Parent copy of child's IEP. The public agency must give the parent a copy of the child's IEP at no cost to the parent.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(B)(i))

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING IEP MEETING TO DISCUSS DISAGREEMENT

(Your Name)
(Your Address)

(Date)

(Name of Principal)
(Name of School)
(Address of School)

Dear (Principal):

I am the parent of (child's name). I am requesting an IEP Team be held as soon as possible to discuss the following items I disagreed with on (Date):

I disagreed with the change in Speech Therapy services because the proposal was not determined by data collection, evaluations, and testing that substantiated my child no longer needed the current level of services. In the meeting the only reason that was I provided for the reduction in services was that the Speech Therapist did not have time to provide my child with 2 hours a week of therapy. It is my understanding that these services are based on my child's needs and not on the availability of school staff.

The following items that were discussed in this meeting I am in agreement with:

List here

Please contact me with written notice that specifies when this meeting is scheduled, who will be in attendance and all evaluations that will be used to make any determinations at this IEP Team meeting. I am available to meet at the following days and times:

January 21, after 2:00 p.m.
January 24, after school
January 26, after 5:00 p.m.
January 27, between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Also, I need something in writing from Rutherford County School System stating that this change will not take place until the IEP team has an opportunity to meet again. It is my understanding that I will need to exercise my due process rights to keep this change from taking place unless I receive something from the school system to this effect.

Please maintain a copy of this letter in my child's permanent school record. Thank you for your help with this matter.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Your Telephone Number)
Copy: (List all people who will receive a copy of this letter.)

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING AN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION

Your Name
Your Address

Date

Name of Principal
Name of School
Address of School

Dear (Name of Principal):

I am the parent of ____ (Child's name) _____. As we have discussed recently, I am interested in finding specific information that will enable my son to make educational progress and close the gap between him and his same age peers. Because my son's disabilities are very unique, it is not always easy to find appropriate instructional interventions.

One of the provisions of IDEA is to consider if a child has need of assistive technology in order to participate fully in the general education curriculum and to remediate areas that are affected by the child's disability. I feel that an assistive technology evaluation is necessary at this time. I am requesting that an assistive technology evaluation be done by someone with experience in identifying appropriate learning strategies for children with ____ (add your child's disability, for example, Autism, Learning Disability, Auditory Processing Deficit) ____.

When the determination is made in regard to the evaluator you plan to use and the date(s) of the evaluation, please send me written notice that includes that information.

(If you know have been in touch with an organization specializing in Assistive Technology that you would like the school to consider using, include this paragraph, otherwise leave this information out.)

In case it would be helpful to you, I received information that the *(add the name of the Assistive Technology Center you have worked with)*, has had success working with children with ____ *(your child's name)* ____ disabilities. They can be reached at ____ *(add that Centers phone number)* ____, if you are interested in talking with them.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter. I look forward to hearing from you within the next ten days. Please maintain a copy of this letter of request in my child's permanent school record.

Sincerely,

Your name
Your telephone number
Copy: (list of all people who will be sent a copy of this letter)

SAMPLE NO RESTRAINT LETTER

Drafted by Calvin and Tricia Luker of the Respect ABILITY Law Center (248) 544-7223

PARENTS NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE ZIP CODE
TELEPHONE NUMBER

Date

(Name of Special Education Director)
(Name of School District)
(Address of School)

Re: child's name and birth date (DOB 8-11-75)

Dear (Name of Special Education Director):

My child, child's name, is a _____ grade student at _____ school. Insert child's name has autism and has been receiving special education services since s/he started school.

We are concerned that insert child's name behavior challenges now are being or might be addressed in part through the use of physical management and restraint. I have not authorized and will not consent to any activity that involves physically or mechanically restraining my child while at school or going to and from school. I know that special education law requires the use of functional assessments of behavior and positive behavior support plans to address behavior challenges. If the school feels insert child's name behavior is such that physical management or restraints are being considered or used, it is obvious to me that we need to follow the law, do the assessment and develop a positive behavior support plan.

I am sure you are aware of the number of news reports in recent years highlighting the death of children with autism during or after having been physically managed or restrained. Given that special education law requires the development of behavior plans, and given the known risks to children – and to insert child's name – of the use of restraint, I need for you to be clear that I will weigh all legal options if restraint activities against insert child's name are not terminated immediately.

You may consider this letter a request to convene a behavior support team meeting to discuss insert child's name behavior and possible approaches to address his/her particular needs. You also may consider this letter my request and consent for the performance of a functional assessment of behavior across environments and across time, provided that I am informed in advance that the functional assessment of behavior is going to be conducted and am permitted to participate in the development and implementation of the assessment.

I want to work with you and with insert child's name teachers and professionals at _____ school to be sure that insert child's name learns to develop positive behavioral skills in an environment that is safe for him/her, for his/her peers and for school personnel. I am certain that you also share my concern for student safety where physical intervention has the potential to result in the student's death. I, like you, want my child's school to be a safe and secure environment where all students can learn. I want to work with you to help create that environment for insert child's name.

Sincerely,

(Your name)

(Your address)

(Your telephone number)

REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF PLACEMENT

What might be some reasons to request a change in your child's class placement? (Remember placement is based on the IEP, so to request a change in placement means that you are actually requesting an IEP review to discuss a change in your child's needs.)

The reasons for requesting a change in your child's placement would be based on concerns that your child's educational, social, and physical needs are not being appropriately met. A review of your child's progress, talks with your child's teacher (s) and therapist (s) as well as discussing this with your child, when appropriate, would reveal that this placement needs to be reconsidered and the IEP reviewed:

These placement concerns might include:

- Changes in your child's needs;
- Current class size may be too large or too small
- Current class may be too academic or not academic enough;
- This class may not provide opportunities for appropriate socialization;
- The building may be too difficult for your child to get around;
- Or any other reason that this class placement is not working out successfully.

SAMPLE GENERAL LETTER FOR DISCUSSING A PROBLEM

Date (include month, day, year)

Your name

Your street address

City, state, zip

Your email address

Your daytime phone number

Full name of person to whom you're writing

Title

Name of school/organization

Street address

City, state, zip

Dear (name of person, use title and last name),

In this paragraph explain who you are, give the full name of your child and his or her current class placement, and VERY BRIEFLY, explain the reason you are writing.

In this paragraph, explain what you would like to have happen or what you would like to see changed. You may BRIEFLY say what you would not like, but spend most of this paragraph saying what you DO want.

Say what type of response you want. For instance, do you need to meet with anyone, do you want a return letter, or a phone call?

Finally give your daytime phone number and let them know that you expect to hear from soon (or give a day, "by the 15th").

Sincerely yours,

Your full Name

CC: (Anyone that you believe needs to be aware of this issue or be a part of the solution.)

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING A DUE PROCESS HEARING

Question: When and how should I initiate due process procedures?

Answer: While the school system may readily comply with your request to evaluate, reevaluate, or meet to review the IEP, that doesn't necessarily mean that you will get the outcome you want. At the meeting you requested to discuss changing your child's placement, the school system may not agree with you. They may feel that your child is in the most appropriate placement. Or at the IEP meeting you requested in order to change goal(s), add services, etc. the school may not want to make these changes or additions because they believe that they are not in the child's best interest and are not appropriate.

If the school staff has communicated its thoughts and you have communicated yours and you both understand, but disagree, you may want to consult with specialists, a mediator, or other persons to try to compromise. **REMEMBER:** the goal is to provide an appropriate education for your child. There are many options on what is an appropriate education, and some trial and error may be necessary to develop a successful program for each student.

Sometimes compromise and further discussion do not lead to agreement between parties, and you may want to request a due process hearing. A due process hearing is a formal proceeding where the differences between you and the school system are shared in front of a qualified impartial hearing officer. The hearing officer's role, after hearing both your side and the school's side, is to make a reasonable decision based on the information presented.

Your letter requesting a hearing should be sent to the person in charge of due process hearings. This may be Superintendent of Schools or the Director of Special Education, or another designate school official. Call the Director of Special Education in your school district to find out the name, title, and address of the person responsible and address your request to his individual. Your letter will then be given to a selected hearing officer. It is the hearing officer who will be responsible for establishing the date, time, and place of the hearing.

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING SECTION 504 EVALUATION

(Date)

(Name of Superintendent or Section 504 Coordinator)

(Name of School System)

(Address)

Dear (Name of Superintendent or 504 Coordinator)

I am the parent of (name of student). I believe that s/he needs to be evaluated for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation of Act of 1973.

My child has a disability that substantially limits a major life activity. I believe my child needs this evaluation because (give reasons) (see examples below).

I understand that the school must conduct a Section 504 evaluation of the needs of children with disabilities and devise appropriate programs for them, even if they are not eligible for special education under IDEA.

Thank you for your help. I look forward to hearing from you within five school days upon your receipt of this letter. Please provide me with any consent forms the school system will need to begin the evaluation process.

Sincerely,

(Parent's name and address)

cc: (School Principal)

This letter was developed as an example. You will need to modify and adapt the letter to meet your individual needs. The following is for your reference and does not need to be submitted with your request:

Example reasons to suspect your child could benefit from a 504 plan:

1. Amy has an orthopedic impairment which limits her use of her hands. Amy needs accommodations in order to participate in the general curriculum.
2. Brian has been diagnosed as having ADHD. Because of this disability, he may need a specialized program.
3. Billy has been diagnosed with Diabetes. He will need a plan to address his health care needs and the administration of his medication during school hours.

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP LETTER

Question: What do I do when things break down?

Answer: Hopefully everything will relatively smoothly and this section can be ignored. Now and then things fall between the cracks or people don't see eye to eye and then other steps can be taken, if desired.

Once you have written a letter requesting an evaluation, an independent educational evaluation at public expense, an IEP review, a meeting of any kind, or a hearing, you should get a response from the school system either by telephone email or in writing, within a reasonable period of time. In some cases, "reasonable" is defined, but in other cases, the timelines are not exact. So be reasonable. But if you feel too much time has passed without receiving a response to your letter, then call and ask if your letter of request has been received. If you are sure the school has received your letter (some parents send their letter of request by certified or registered mail), then ask when you can expect to hear from them. More than likely, when you call, you will talk to a secretary or administrative assistant. Ask that the superintendant, principal or teacher cal you back.

If your request still goes unanswered, then you may want to write again. It would be useful to enclose a copy of the original request with this letter. Be sure not to send your only copy, remember, you will always need to have a copy for your records.

Many of the sample letters in this packet were originally created by STEP, Inc.

This resource booklet has been compiled by LifeLine, Inc.

For additional help and training on when and how to use these letters,
join STEP and LifeLine for trainings on Special Education Topics.

Our Training Schedules can be found at



www.tnstep.org

and



www.lifelinefamilies.org



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