

**SAMPLE LETTER 1:
FIRST REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT**

[To request special education services for your child, WRITE a letter to your child's district special education administrator. Cc teacher, principal or others involved with your child's education. Tell the school district that you are concerned about your child's educational progress and that you are making a referral for assessment for special education services.]

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Ms. Bev Blue [Parent Name]
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Telephone Number

Date [IMPORTANT: This process is driven by timelines.
Date everything and note how it was delivered—mail or fax. Email is not recommended]

ATTN: Mr. Gary Green
Director of Special Education
Local Unified School District
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. Green:

I am the parent of John Blue, who is [X] years old and is currently enrolled at the [Regular Elementary School] in the [X] grade. My child has not been functioning well in school and I am concerned about his educational progress. I am writing to make a referral for assessment for special education services as allowed under the child find obligations of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and California Education Code Secs. 56029, 56301, 56302, and 56321(a) and 5 California Code of Regulations (C.C.R.) Sec. 3021. He may be eligible for special education assistance. I am requesting that John be given a comprehensive assessment by the school district related to the areas of concern outlined below, and that an IEP meeting be scheduled for him.

Note: In every request for INITIAL assessment, you should include a paragraph requesting that your child also be evaluated under the provisions of Section 504 for any "disabling condition" which would require service accommodations and/or services that will allow the child to benefit from public education to the extent that students without disabilities do. (However, DO NOT agree to substitute a 504 Assessment for a special education assessment.) Such a paragraph might read as follows:

As part of the assessment process, I also request that my child be assessed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to determine whether he should be identified as handicapped pursuant to that law and to determine what, if any, accommodations might be required in his educational program in the event that he does not qualify for special education services, or in addition to special education services. This is also to request that the [Local Unified School District's] 504 Coordinator be present at the IEP meeting to discuss the results and recommendations of the Section 504 assessment.

My specific concerns for John are as follows:

[NOTE: You may give specific examples of difficulties and concerns you, teacher or doctor have noted. If you have a specific diagnosis or evaluations already, you may want to include them with the letter. You may want to attach doctor's documentation or succinct valuable reports if you believe this will help your school district understand your child's disability/needs, or state that you have this documentation and can make it available to the school district. You may want to include Star test results, any written work, report cards, etc. that builds your case. You may want to get the classroom teacher to give you concrete examples and work products in writing that support the need for further investigation of the child's problems. The U.S. Congress in IDEA law specifically used the term "educational progress," a broad term to encompass all kinds of progress a child is expected to make in school, and is not limited to academic progress. It can mean motor problems, social problems, behavior issues, academic performance concerns, sensory overwhelm, etc. Here are some examples:

- Testing: My child is in 4th grade and scoring below basic in the State tests in math, despite doing all the homework and trying his best.
- Motor: My child has extreme difficulty with fine motor tasks and cannot write sufficiently well to complete classroom assignments in the time allotted.
- Behavior/Socialization: My child is having behavior difficulties that are impairing his ability to succeed in the classroom environment. For example, he can't keep his hands to himself, sit still, can't resolve conflicts or socialize in an age appropriate way, he is being disciplined regularly, going to the office, etc.
- Specific Disability or Health Issues: My child has a diagnosis of (name disability such as Autism, Dyslexia, Diabetes, Severe Allergy, etc., if applicable.) This affects his educational success because (exclusion, performance, etc).

- **Transition Services:** I am concerned that my child does not have the skills necessary to successfully transition into the community or college after graduation or completion of high school. For example, he cannot balance a checkbook, take public transportation, etc. The assessment should examine his social, educational, emotional, career and independent living skills in order to develop an appropriate transition plan in his IEP.

[OPTION: If you know which areas you think need assessed or know specific tests, you might add examples tailored to your child, like the following: I request that the [Local Unified School District] conduct the following evaluations of my son, John:

- A psycho-educational evaluation to determine John's learning challenges and strengths, using instruments designed for non-verbal children such as the Leiter International Performance Scale-Revised or the Hiskey Nebraska Test of Learning Aptitude;
- An evaluation by an Augmentative and Alternative Communications (AAC) specialist for children who are non-verbal communicators. To my knowledge, the district does not have on staff any experts in this field. I have been recommended to [Barbara Brown, Ph.D.] in non-verbal communication, and unless the district has a comparable expert, I am requesting that you contract with [Dr. Brown] to do the non-verbal communication evaluation of my son.
- An Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment to determine how to support John's need for proper positioning for learning due to his orthopedic impairment, and to help support his high sensitivity to sensory stimuli.
- An Assistive Technology (AT) assessment to determine the appropriate tools, strategies and services that may be necessary to assist my child in accessing and benefiting from his educational program.
- A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to determine the triggers and function of my son's behavioral difficulties in order to develop a Positive Behavioral Support Plan (BSP) and goals to enable him to learn to replace difficult behaviors with acceptable behaviors so that he may make educational progress.

I look forward to receiving an Assessment Plan in 15 days for my review and consent so that the evaluations can proceed. I look forward to these evaluations being completed promptly and an IEP meeting within 60 days to discuss the results and plan for John's supported education. Also, please ensure that I get copies of the assessment reports at least 5 days before the IEP meeting so that I will have adequate time to review them and prepare any questions I may have for the team.

Sincerely,

Bev Blue, parent of John

Cc: appropriate members of your child's educational team