

# 6 steps to request a free school evaluation

By Amanda Morin

*We partner with [Understood.org](https://www.understood.org) to provide educators and families with expert-vetted, evidence-based resources about learning differences.*

If you want to request an **evaluation for special education**, you may wonder how to get that process going. It's best to send a letter to the school. Here are the steps to make it happen.

## 1. Find out where to send your request.

Ask your child's teacher who to send your request to. If the teacher doesn't know, you can either ask the principal or call the school district's main office.

## 2. Write a letter or email.

It's best to put your request in writing. The letter creates a record of when you made the request. The school has to respond within a certain number of days – it's part of the law. [Download a sample letter](#) to give yourself a model to follow.

## 3. Be specific about why you're requesting the evaluation.

Include details about why you're requesting the evaluation. It's OK to say things like, "I'm requesting that my child be evaluated because her trouble with reading makes me think she may have dyslexia." But you can also describe your concerns more broadly like, "My child seems to have a lot of trouble paying attention" or "Homework takes forever and almost always ends in tears."

## 4. Consent to your child being evaluated.

Say in your letter that you're **giving consent** for your child to be evaluated. Without your consent, the school can't do any testing. To make sure it's done according to the rules, ask for a "Consent to Evaluate" form to sign, too.

## 5. Make sure the letter arrives.

Hand-deliver it or send it via certified mail ("return receipt requested"). If you hand-deliver the letter, ask for a date-stamped, signed copy to have for your own records. If you email your request, you'll get a message if there is a problem with any of the addresses.

## 6. Follow up.

After five days, if you haven't heard anything, check in with the school. You can do this by phone, but **send an email afterward** outlining the next steps that were talked about in that phone conversation. Your email gives you something in writing that you can come back to if you need to remind anyone of that conversation.

## Learn more

- Find out **what to do if the school denies your request**.
- See **what to expect during the evaluation process**.
- Get tips on **how to talk to your child about evaluations**.

### Author

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