

Special Education Rights of Parents and Children

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, and the

California Education Code

Notice of Procedural Safeguards

Revised October 2016

Note: The term school district is used throughout this document to describe any public education agency responsible for providing your child's special education program. The term assessment is used to mean evaluation or testing. Federal and state laws are cited throughout this notice using English abbreviations, which are explained in a glossary on the last page of this notification.

What is the Notice of Procedural Safeguards?

This information provides you as parents, legal guardians, and surrogate parents of children with disabilities from three (3) years of age through age twenty-one (21) and students who have reached age eighteen (18), the age of majority, with an overview of your educational rights or procedural safeguards.

The Notice of Procedural Safeguards is required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (in English, referred to as IDEA) and must be provided to you:

- When you ask for a copy
- The first time your child is referred for a special education assessment
- Each time you are given an assessment plan to evaluate your child
- Upon receipt of the first state or due process complaint in a school year, and
- When the decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement

(20 USC 1415[d]; 34 CFR 300.504; EC 56301[d] [2], EC 56321, and 56341.1[g] [1])

What is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?

IDEA is a federal law that requires school districts to provide a "free appropriate public education" (in English, referred to as FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities. A free appropriate public education means that special education and related services are to be provided as described in an individualized education program (in English, known as IEP) and under public supervision to your child at no cost to you.

May I participate in decisions about my child's education?

You must be given opportunities to participate in any decision-making meeting regarding your child's special education program. You have the right to participate in IEP team meetings about the identification (eligibility), assessment, or educational placement of your child and other matters relating to your child's FAPE. (20 USC 1414[d] [1]B–[d][1][D]; 34 CFR 300.321; EC 56341[b], 56343[c])

The parent or guardian, or the local educational agency (LEA), has the right to participate in the development of the IEP and to initiate their intent to electronically audiotape the proceedings of the IEP team meetings. At least 24 hours prior to the meeting, the parent or guardian shall notify the members of the IEP team of their intent to record a meeting. If the parent or guardian does not consent to the LEA audio tape recording an IEP meeting, the meeting shall not be recorded on an audiotape recorder.

Your rights include information about the availability of FAPE, including all program options, and all available alternative programs, both public and nonpublic. (20 USC 1401[3], 1412[a][3]; 34 CFR 300.111; EC 56301, 56341.1[g][1], and 56506)

Where can I get more help?

When you have a concern about your child's education, it is important that you contact your child's teacher or administrator to talk about your child and any problems you see. Staff in your school district or special education local plan area (SELPA) may answer questions about your child's education, your rights, and procedural safeguards. Also, when you have a concern, this informal conversation often solves the problem and helps to maintain open communication.

You may also want to contact one of the California parent organizations (Family Empowerment Centers and Parent Training Institutes), which were developed to increase collaboration between parents and educators to improve the educational system. Contact information for these organizations is found on the CDE special education California Parent Organizations Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/caprntorg.asp>.

Additional resources are listed at the end of this document to help you understand the procedural safeguards.

What if my child is deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind?

The State Special Schools provide services to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind at each of its three facilities: the California Schools for the Deaf in Fremont and Riverside and at the California School for the Blind in Fremont. Residential and day school programs are offered to students from infancy to age 21 at both State Schools for the Deaf. Such programs are offered to students aged five through 21 at the California School for the Blind. The State Special Schools also offer assessment services and technical assistance. For more information about the State Special Schools, please visit the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/> or ask for more information from the members of your child's IEP team.

Notice, Consent, Assessment, Surrogate Parent Appointment, and Access to Records

Prior Written Notice

When is a notice needed?

This notice must be given when the school district proposes or refuses to initiate a change in the identification, assessment, or educational placement of your child with special needs or the provision of a free appropriate public education. (20 USC 1415[b][3] and (4), 1415[c][1], 1414[b][1]; 34 CFR 300.503; EC 56329 and 56506[a])

The school district must inform you about proposed evaluations of your child in a written notice or an assessment plan within fifteen (15) days of your written request for evaluation. The notice must be understandable and in your native language or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. (34 CFR 300.304; EC 56321)

What will the notice tell me?

The Prior Written Notice must include the following:

1. A description of the actions proposed or refused by the school district
2. An explanation of why the action was proposed or refused
3. A description of each assessment procedure, record, or report the agency used as a basis for the action proposed or refused
4. A statement that parents of a child with a disability have protection under the procedural safeguards
5. Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of this part
6. A description of other options that the IEP team considered and the reasons those options were rejected; and
7. A description of any other factors relevant to the action proposed or refused. (20 USC 1415[b][3] and [4], 1415[c][1], 1414[b][1]; 34 CFR 300.503)

Parental Consent

When is my approval required for assessment?

You have the right to refer your child for special education services. You must give informed, written consent before your child's first special education assessment can proceed. The parent

has at least fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the proposed assessment plan to arrive at a decision. The assessment may begin immediately upon receipt of the consent and must be completed and an IEP developed within sixty (60) days of your consent.

When is my approval required for services?

You must give informed, written consent before your school district can provide your child with special education and related services.

What are the procedures when a parent does not provide consent?

If you do not provide consent for an initial assessment or fail to respond to a request to provide the consent, the school district may pursue the initial assessment by utilizing due process procedures.

If you refuse to consent to the initiation of services, the school district must not provide special education and related services and shall not seek to provide services through due process procedures.

If you consent in writing to the special education and related services for your child but do not consent to all of the components of the IEP, those components of the program to which you have consented must be implemented without delay.

If the school district determines that the proposed special education program component to which you do not consent is necessary to provide a free appropriate public education to your child, a due process hearing must be initiated. If a due process hearing is held, the hearing decision shall be final and binding.

In the case of reevaluations, the school district must document reasonable measures to obtain your consent. If you fail to respond, the school district may proceed with the reevaluation without your consent. (20 USC 1414[a][1][D] and 1414[c]; 34 CFR 300.300; EC 56506[e], 56321[c] and [d], and 56346).

When may I revoke consent?

If at any time subsequent to the initial provision of special education and related services, the parent of a child revokes consent in writing for the continued provision of special education and related services, the public agency:

1. May not continue to provide special education and related services to the child, but must provide prior written notice in accordance with 34 CFR Section 300.503 before ceasing such services
2. May not use the procedures in subpart E of Part 300 34 CFR (including the mediation procedures under 34 CFR Section 300.506 or the due process procedures under 34 CFR Sections 300.507 through 300.516) in order to obtain agreement or a ruling that the

services may be provided to the child

3. Will not be considered to be in violation of the requirement to make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to the child because of the failure to provide the child with further special education and related services
4. Is not required to convene an IEP team meeting or develop an IEP under 34 CFR Sections 300.320 and 300.324 for the child for further provision of special education and related services

Please note, in accordance with 34 CFR Section 300.9 (c)(3), that if the parents revoke consent in writing for their child's receipt of special education services after the child is initially provided special education and related services, the public agency is not required to amend the child's education records to remove any references to the child's receipt of special education and related services because of the revocation of consent.

Surrogate Parent Appointment

What if a parent cannot be identified or located?

School districts must ensure that an individual is assigned to act as a surrogate parent for the parents of a child with a disability when a parent cannot be identified and the school district cannot discover the whereabouts of a parent.

A surrogate parent may also be appointed if the child is an unaccompanied homeless youth, an adjudicated dependent or ward of the court under the state Welfare and Institution Code, and is referred to special education or already has an IEP. (20 USC 1415[b][2] ; 34 CFR 300.519; EC 56050; GC 7579.5 and 7579.6)