

PDI Guide to the NYC
Special Education Referral Process for Children age 3 – 5

Step 1: Referral to Committee on Preschool Special Education

- Made through the NYC Department of Education to the child's local school district
- Referral for evaluation is made in writing by the child's parent(s). The letter states that the parent is concerned about their child's development and is requesting a comprehensive evaluation
- Contact local Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) for support

Step 2: Evaluation Process

- Local school district will respond to parents request for evaluation by mailing a consent letter to the parent. The parent then selects an appropriate agency to complete evaluation
- The selected agency begins an information gathering process which includes a series of individual assessments and observations. The evaluation must include the following:
 - Social History (interview with parent about birth, child's early development, and health)
 - Physical examination
 - Psychological evaluation (which looks at cognitive and educational skills, adaptive behavior skills, and social/emotional development)
 - Observation of student in natural environment (at home or school)
 - Speech and Language evaluation
- Additional components, depending on area of concern, may include:
 - Occupation therapy evaluation (which looks at fine motor skills and sensory skills)
 - Physical therapy evaluation (which looks at gross motor/large muscle skills)
 - A teacher report of students performance and behavior

Step 3: Meeting with Committee on Preschool Special Education

- When evaluations are completed, they are submitted to the child's local school district.
- A letter is mailed to the parent for a meeting with a representative from the local school district, a member of the evaluation team, and whomever the parent invites to attend. At this meeting results of the evaluations are discussed and recommendations are made.
- There are two possible outcomes:
 1. The child does not meet criteria for services
 - The child is found ineligible and no services are awarded
 - The family can request an impartial hearing process if the family would like to re-assess the child's need for services
 2. The child meets criteria for services
 - Evaluation's identify a 33% delay in one developmental area of 25% delay in two developmental areas
 - The child is identified as a "preschool student with a disability"
 - An Individual Education Program (IEP) is developed identifying appropriate special education programs and/or services, placement, and educational goals