

# Chapter 9 - The Triennial Evaluation

## What is the Triennial Evaluation?

Under IDEA 2004, a student must be re-evaluated at least every three years. This is known as a triennial review. The purpose of the triennial review is to find out:

- if the student continues to be a "student with a disability," as defined within the law, and
- the student's educational needs.

The re-evaluation is similar to the initial evaluation. It begins by looking at the information already available about the student. More information is collected only if it's needed. If the group decides that additional assessments are needed, the parent/guardians must give their informed written permission before the school system may collect that information. The school system may only go ahead without their informed written permission if they have tried to get the parent/guardians' permission and they did not respond.

Although the law requires that students with disabilities be re-evaluated at least every three years, the student may be re-evaluated more often if the parent/guardians or their student's teacher(s) request it.

(a) General. A public agency must ensure that a reevaluation of each student with a disability is conducted in accordance with Sec. Sec. 300.304 through 300.311--

(1) If the public agency determines that the educational or related services needs, including improved academic achievement and functional performance, of the student warrant a reevaluation; or

(2) If the student's parent/guardian or teacher requests a reevaluation.

(b) Limitation. A reevaluation conducted under paragraph (a) of this section--

(1) May occur not more than once a year, unless the parent/guardian and the public agency agree otherwise; and

(2) Must occur at least once every 3 years, unless the parent/guardian and the public agency agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1414(a)(2))

## What Professionals are Involved in the Triennial Evaluation?

The team that will reevaluate the student may vary depending on the information already obtained, the age of the student, and state guidelines. For instance, if a student has had several intelligence tests over the years, the IEP Committee may not require a new one if the results have been consistent from test to test. Therefore, the psychologist may not be involved with this area. It is best to ask the chairperson of the IEP Committee or a member of the assessment team which professionals will be doing the assessment and what areas they will be evaluating i.e. the special education teacher may be evaluating reading, math, spelling, and writing levels, along with processing ability.

## **How will the Parent/guardians find out about the Results of the Triennial Evaluation?**

Once the Triennial Evaluation is complete and the report generated, the parent/guardian should hear from a member of the assessment team who will set up a meeting to go over the results. In some districts this may occur prior to the Annual Review and in others it may occur at the Annual Review if it is also a Triennial year. The parent/guardian should ask the team members when they will be hearing about the results when they are brought in for an update of information from the last testing. They may also contact the chairperson of the IEP Committee and ask when they should expect to hear the results of the Triennial Evaluation.

## **What Information will the Parent/guardian(s) be asked to Provide during the Triennial Evaluation?**

In most cases the parent/guardians will be asked to update any information since the last triennial evaluation or since the initial evaluation if this is the first triennial. This update might contain (but not be limited to) the following:

- What has changed in the family situation i.e. health issues, new jobs, loss of jobs, new house, death, new births etc?
- What has changed at home in terms of the student's peer interactions?
- What has the student's emotional state been since the last evaluation i.e. increase or decrease in tantrums, reactions, compliance, depression, calmness etc. ?
- What has been the parent/guardian's perception of progress in school since the last evaluation?
- Has there been any outside evaluations done on the student since the last evaluation i.e. medical, psychological, and educational?
- Have there been any major changes in the student's health or medical status since the last evaluation?
- Have there been any traumatic experiences since the last evaluation?
- Has there been any sleep or changes in eating habits since the last evaluation?
- Is the student on any medications? If so for what reasons?
- Has the student sustained any falls or injuries since the last evaluation?
- Has the student joined in or participated in any sports activities, groups or organizations since the last evaluation?
- If so what has been the student's experiences with these activities?
- Has the student exhibited any changes in physical ability, coordination, or muscle control since the last evaluation?

## **What Suggestions Should You Make to Parent/guardians About Their Participation in the Triennial Evaluation?**

Parent/guardians should be encouraged to check records at home and make sure an evaluation is scheduled every three years. When he or she is notified of the triennial evaluation, he or she may want to request additional evaluations which may provide you with a more comprehensive assessment of the student's needs. If the parent/guardian(s) have questions about new tests, call the IEP Committee for information. A parent/guardian should be encouraged to ask about the type of assessment instruments that will be used, the purpose, what they measure, and how results will be reported i.e. objectively like grade equivalents or percentiles, or subjectively, like a general analysis. Prior to the meeting, the parent/guardian should ask to review evaluative results and write down any questions he or she may have regarding reports.

## **What Record-Keeping Ideas should be suggested to Parent/guardians during the Triennial Evaluation Phase?**

Parent/guardians should be encouraged to try to record the names of tests that are given each year and keep an ongoing record of test results from the triennial evaluation. It will be important that they keep a copy of every Triennial Evaluation given each year. They are entitled to have copies of these evaluations and if they do not receive them they should make a request in writing to either the chairperson of the IEP Committee or someone on the assessment team.