

Initial Referral to Special Education

When a student is first placed under eligibility review for special education services, they are typically referred for evaluation by a teacher or parent, or in some cases, when the RTI process recommends special education.

How to complete an initial referral

Steps *Steps to complete an initial referral to special education:*

1. Complete a **Referral for Initial Evaluation**
 - If there was a pre-referral process with supporting documents, you may add them as attachments directly to the referral document or you can create a separate **Student Observation** document.
 - If you are creating the referral but will not be doing the remainder of the paperwork, share the document with whoever will be responsible and set them as the owner so any future deadlines are assigned to them.
2. Complete a **Prior Written Notice** and specify you will "**propose**" to "**initiate**" the "**evaluation of the child**" to notify the parent/guardian *and* complete a **Consent for Initial Evaluation** and share it with the parent/guardian to obtain consent.
 - Rather than completing two separate documents, some districts choose to complete a **Notice and Consent for Evaluation** instead so they can notify the parent/guardian and obtain consent with one document. If you use this document, specify it is for an **initial evaluation**.
3. Conduct a **Full and Individual Evaluation** (FIE) to determine the student's eligibility for special education services.
4. Send a **Notice of ARD Committee Meeting** where the purpose is to "**develop, review, and/or revise the student's IEP**".
5. Fill out the initial **Individualized Education Program** (IEP).
6. After completing the IEP, send a **Prior Written Notice** to the parent/guardian to inform them you "**propose**" to "**initiate**" the "**educational placement of the child**" or the "**free appropriate public education to the child**".

7. Last, create a **Consent for Services** to obtain parent/guardian consent. This is required for an initial IEP.

- Once this is completed, if the parent/guardian gave consent, the child will be considered to be participating in the special education program.

Calculating deadlines with absences

For the child find process, SameGoal recalculates deadlines to account for student absences. However, only absences within the original deadline window are taken into account. Any day that a student is absent after the original deadline will not be taken into account.

For example, if an initial FIE was originally due on 10/1 but is now due on 10/8 to account for absences, an absence on 10/2 will **not** affect the deadline since it is after the original deadline.

Some districts may have calculated this differently in the past, but based on strict reading of the legal language and the case law, SameGoal uses a conservative interpretation.