



GULF SHORES CITY SCHOOLS
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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PARENT TIP SHEET

HELPING DOLPHINS NAVIGATE THE SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL PROCESS

The Gulf Shores City School System is dedicated to working with families in a collaborative environment that promotes positive educational performance for students. In an effort to strengthen our family partnership, this form was created to assist parents through the “Initial Referral” process. Please do not hesitate to call us with questions, input, and/or concerns. Special Education Rights and additional information can be found at <https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Pages/home.aspx>.

Step 1: Special education referrals can be made via “Child Find”, Guardian request, or through the school’s Response to Intervention (RTI) team. A “Notice of Proposed Meeting” will be sent home specifying the time/date of the “Referral” meeting.

Step 2: At the “Referral” meeting, a team of school professionals will discuss your child’s academic, developmental, and/or social/emotional progress. Your input is highly valued as it helps provide the team with a greater understanding of your child’s strengths and needs. At the conclusion of the meeting, the team will decide if the referral warrants the need for a special education evaluation.

- No: The child will be referred back to the school’s RTI team for further interventions and progress monitoring.
- Yes: Guardians are provided the opportunity to consent or deny the school permission to conduct an evaluation. Upon receiving consent, the school has a maximum of 90 days to conduct the evaluation and the “Eligibility” meeting.

Evaluation: The child will be evaluated in all areas of suspected disability. (*Exceptionalities recognized by the State of Alabama include Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disability, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury and Visual Impairment.*)

Preschool children undergoing testing should allow up to 4 hours for evaluation completion. Please bring your child’s favorite toy to play with during breaks as well as a snack/drink. A guardian must remain on campus for the completion of all evaluations.

Step 3: A “Notice” will be sent home specifying the time/date of the “Eligibility” meeting. At the “Eligibility” meeting, the team will determine if the evaluation results meet the criteria for special education and related services as defined in the Alabama Administrative Code.

- No: The child will be referred back to the school’s RTI team for further interventions and progress monitoring.
- Yes: Guardians consent or deny the school permission to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Upon receiving consent, the school has a maximum of 30 days to conduct the “IEP” meeting. Plans are reviewed annually and students are reevaluated every three years.