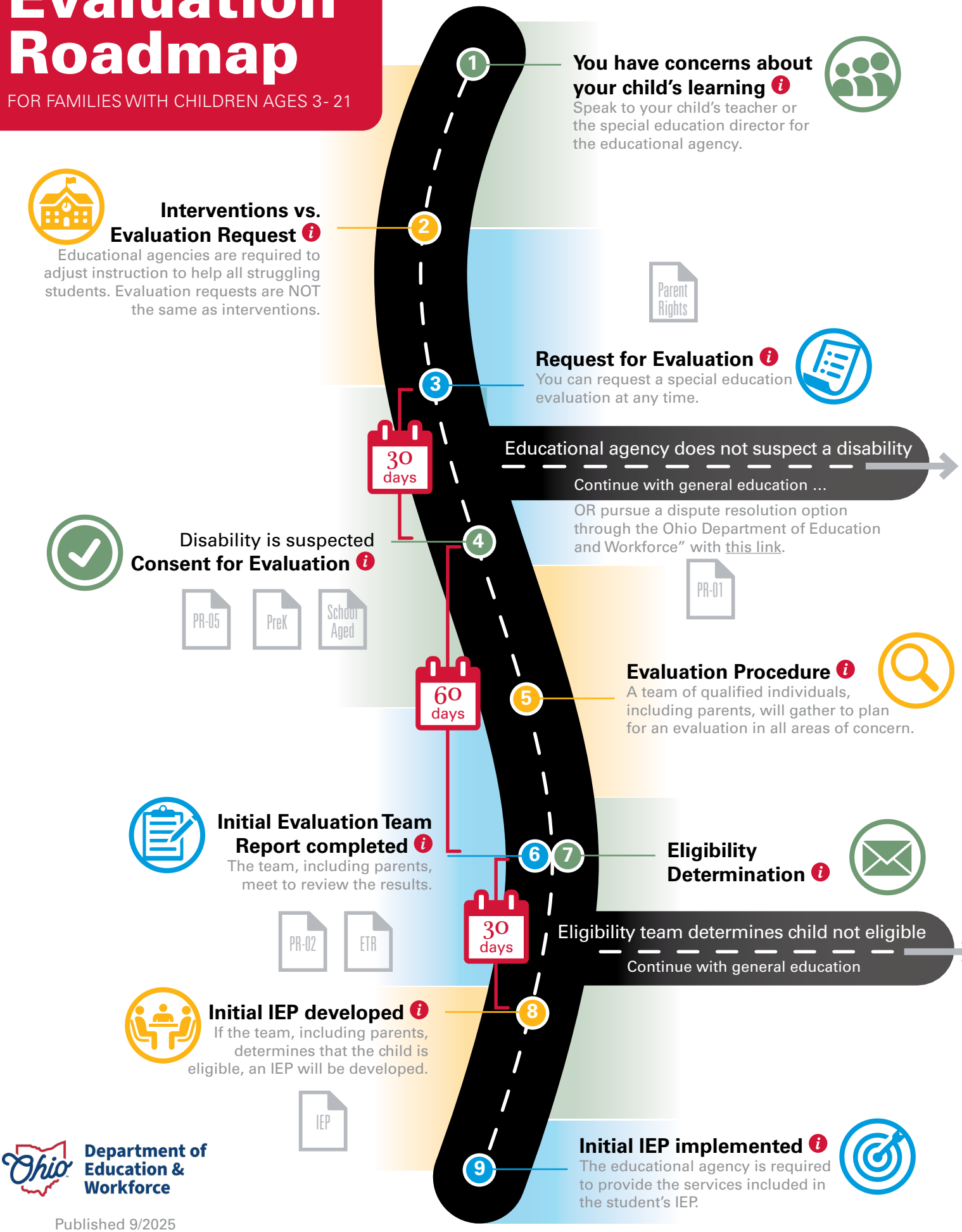
Evaluation Roadmap

FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGES 3- 21

– Click on these icons throughout for additional information.



Department of Education & Workforce

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1. You have concerns about your child's learning

If you have concerns about your child's learning, development, or functioning, you can speak to the special education director for the educational agency*. This person typically works at the district level, not in your student's school building. If you are unsure who this person is, you can contact the board office to ask for a name and contact information. You can also reach out to your child's principal or teacher.

For preschool (ages 3-5), the first step to see if your child has any delays in functional, developmental, and/or academic readiness areas is also to contact the school district where you, the parent, reside. Most school district contact information can be found on the district's website.

*"Educational agency" means:

- School districts, including school districts of service, open enrollment school districts, community schools, the Ohio department of youth services, and joint vocational school districts;
- Juvenile justice facilities, educational service centers, county boards of developmental disabilities; and
- Any department; division; bureau; office; institution; board; commission; committee; authority; or other state or local agency, other than a school district or an agency administered by the department of developmental disabilities, that provides or seeks to provide special education or related services to children with disabilities, unless Chapter 3323. of the Revised Code, or a rule adopted by the state board of education specifies that another school district, other educational agency, or other agency, department, or entity is responsible for ensuring compliance with Part B of the IDEA.

2. Interventions vs. Evaluation Request

- **Intervention:** Educational agencies are required to provide instruction in a manner to help all students learn. Strategies to adjust instruction to help struggling students are called interventions and are for all students (not just special education).
- **Evaluation Request:** Requesting an initial evaluation for special education is not the same as interventions. Interventions must be conducted before or during the initial evaluation. An educational agency may not use interventions to delay an evaluation. If interventions have not been conducted, they must happen at the same time as the evaluation.

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3. Request for Evaluation

- If you suspect your child has a disability, you may request a special education evaluation. This does not need to be in writing; however, it is good to document the date of request for your own records.
- For preschool, when you as the parent contact the special education staff in your educational agency, you can initiate the request for an initial evaluation to determine if your child is eligible to receive preschool special education services and what programs can best fit his or her individual needs.
- The educational agency has 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the request to respond to your request. The educational agency must either send you a prior written notice (called a PR-01) that the educational agency does not suspect a disability or obtain your consent to conduct an evaluation. The educational agency will provide you a copy of the Special Education Procedural Safeguards Notice called A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education.
- An educational agency is not allowed to delay an evaluation in order to provide interventions. If the educational agency has not yet provided interventions before the initial evaluation, the educational agency must do the interventions at the same time as the initial evaluation.
- If the educational agency does not suspect a disability, your child will continue with general education. If you disagree with the educational agency's decision, you may pursue a dispute resolution option through the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

4. Consent for Evaluation

- If the educational agency suspects a disability, it will obtain your consent (consent form is called a PR-05: Parent Consent for Evaluation). From the date of your consent, the educational agency will have 60 calendar days to complete the initial evaluation.
- A team of qualified individuals, including you as the parent, will discuss the suspected disability categories and the areas that need to be evaluated. This all must be documented on the Evaluation Team Report (ETR) Planning form, which has different versions for preschool and school age.
- This meeting must take place before any assessments can be carried out. You as the parent are to be an active member in this team to help decide the assessments to be administered.
- The educational agency does not have to name the specific evaluation it is going to use, just the area it plans to evaluate. For preschool, each developmental area must be assessed.
- For preschool, it is important to note that if your young child ages 3-5 has never attended a preschool program, or your child did not transition from IDEA Part C (Early Intervention) to Part B (Special Education), it is quite possible that there has been no opportunity for the educational agency to provide interventions. Interventions are only required for preschool children if the child previously received services under Part C and/or Part B of IDEA or is being evaluated under the suspected disability category of specific learning disability. If interventions have not been provided prior to referral, the educational agency may implement appropriate interventions during the same sixty-day time frame during which the educational agency conducts a full and individual evaluation to resolve concerns for any preschool child who is experiencing significant delays in one or more of the following developmental areas, and for that reason need special education and related services: adaptive behavior, cognition, communication, hearing, vision, sensory/motor functioning, social/emotional functioning and/or behavioral functioning. The educational agency may not use these interventions to delay unnecessarily your child's being evaluated to determine eligibility for special education services.

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5. Evaluation Procedure

- In conducting the initial evaluation, the educational agency must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information, including information provided by the parent. The educational agency cannot use any single source of information and must use technically sound instruments to assess cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.
- Assessments and other evaluation materials must be selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis administered in your child's native language or other modes of communication, and in the form most likely to yield accurate results.
- Your child must be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities.
- For preschool, each developmental area must be assessed using at least one of the 5 assessment methods/data sources AND each assessment method/data source must be used at least once. Remember that the initial evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of your child's special education and related service needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which your child has been classified.

6. Initial Evaluation Team Report completed

- As the parent, you will receive a Parent Invitation (called a PR-02) to review evaluation data and summaries of each evaluation that occurred. The PR-02 must state who the district will bring to the meeting. As the parent, you can also bring anyone with you to the meeting.
- Together the team of professionals and the parent will review the evaluation results and determine whether your child is a child with a disability. The data and summaries of evaluation along with the eligibility determination will be on the Evaluation Team Report form (called a PR-06).

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7. Eligibility Determination

- If the team including you as the parent finds your child to be eligible for special education services, it will determine the eligibility category. If the team does not find your child to be eligible, your child will continue with only the general education curriculum. Any team member, including the parent, may submit a statement of disagreement with the team's determination. If your child is found not eligible, you may request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). An IEE is an opportunity for a parent to have an outside professional, not employed by the educational agency, conduct a private educational evaluation.
- For preschool, if your child is not found eligible and is not currently enrolled in a preschool program, the educational agency may provide a list of optional local and/or school district operated preschool programs that may be available.

8. Initial IEP developed

- If the team including you as the parent determines that your child is eligible for special education, the district has 30 days to develop an initial Individualized Education Program (IEP form called a PR-07).
- The IEP must contain specially designed instruction to meet the individualized needs identified in your child's Evaluation Team Report (ETR form called a PR-06), with measurable goals and objectives along with how progress will be measured.
- The IEP team consists of you as the parent, a regular education teacher of the child (if the child has one), at least one special education teacher, a district representative, someone who can interpret evaluation results, and anyone you or the educational agency believes has knowledge or interest of your child.
- For preschool, the required IEP team members include: parent, regular education teacher, special education teacher/provider and a district representative.
- For the initial IEP, you as the parent must consent to services. If you do not consent, your child will not receive IEP services.
- Although your consent is required just for the initial IEP (or any change in educational placement), educational agencies are required to invite you to attend and participate in all IEP meetings. You have the right to revoke consent for your child's IEP at any time.

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9. Initial IEP implemented

- The educational agency is required to provide the services included in your child's IEP.
- Each educational agency must ensure that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to every child with a disability. For preschool, this is regardless of whether the educational agency operates their own public general early childhood programs or contracts with other educational agencies.
- Your child's educational agency will conduct a reevaluation at least every three years, unless you as the parent and the educational agency agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary. The educational agency will review the IEP at least annually.

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