

Parent Support

Steps:

1. *Talk to your child's teacher about your concerns*

- a. Make sure you have written down your concerns before the meeting.
- b. Ask the teacher what he/she has observed about your child's academic progress
- c. Ask questions such as – Do you think my child is having trouble with reading? What specific trouble is my child having? What can I do to help my child at home? What can be done to help my child in class? How is my child reading compared to other students? Is my child receiving any additional help in reading? Do you think my child would benefit from additional help in reading?
- d. Work with your child's teacher to develop a plan for supporting your child's reading needs. This may include things you'll work on at home but should also include help in school.
- e. Decide on a time and date you will meet again to see how your child is progressing.

2. *Find out about the Universal Screener your child takes 3 times each year (available fall 2014)*

- a. Ask how your child compares to the benchmarks
- b. Understand the skills that are being assessed. Below are some example Kindergarten skills:
 - Reading letter names and identifying letter sounds
 - Understanding concepts of print (eg. We read from left to right on a page.)
 - Identifying individual sounds they hear in a word (eg. "at" has two sounds: /a/ and /t/)
 - Reading commonly used words by sight (eg. "the")
 - Blending sounds together to read simple words
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- c. An example of a sample score report:

Your child's total score in the Kindergarten screening process is listed below:

Time period (circle one):	Student's Actual Score	Benchmark score (Grade level expected score)
Fall		
Winter		
Spring		

3. Be sure to keep a written record.

- a. As you go through the process of getting help for your child, be sure to keep a written record.
- b. Take notes and write down the date and name of each person you met with, what you talked about, and what you decided.

4. Follow the chain of command.

- a. If you let your child's teacher know about a problem and nothing changes, try calling or writing again.
- b. Then contact the child's guidance counselor, assistant principal, or principal.
- c. If you still need assistance, contact the office of the district administrator or superintendent.

Your local Area Education Agency (AEA) also has support for parents through the Parent-Educator Connection. The Parent-Educator Connection, a statewide network of families and educators working together to serve children and young adults with special needs. Parent Coordinators and Parent Advisors are parents of individuals who have disabilities.

5. Child Find

- a. In Iowa, the process of referring a child age three through twenty-one for special education is called Child Find.
- b. Schools have the responsibility to identify students in need of special services,
- c. **Parents** can initiate that process by submitting a written request to the child's teacher or principal.
- d. Area Education Agency staff will be assigned to conduct the evaluation for your child. **You** will be included in this evaluation.

6. Evaluation

- a. Your child will be evaluated to determine whether he or she has an educational disability and is eligible for special-education services.
- b. Download a copy of the Procedural Safeguards to understand your rights throughout the process. You will also be provided with a copy of these rights.
 - i. Birth through Three:
<https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/special-education/2013/04/early-access-procedural-safeguards-manual-parents-rights>
 - ii. Three through Twenty-One:
<https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/preschool-programs/2013/08/2013-procedural-safeguards-manual-parents-rights-children-ages>

7. Eligibility

- a. After the evaluation is completed, a team of teachers, administrators, AEA staff, and you will meet. Eligibility is a team decision and **you** are part of the team.

- b. A parent may bring additional information obtained from outside sources (medical, outside evaluations, student data from tutoring) but will not be reimbursed by the district for those evaluations.
- c. Parents may bring other people to any school meeting. Be sure to notify the school who you are bringing in advance of the meeting.
- d. If your child is found eligible, the team will plan an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child, after you provide consent for special education services.
- e. Learn more about IEPs and other special-education terms and offerings from the [Iowa Department of Education](#) website.

8. Parent Support Groups

- a. During the evaluation and IEP process, and throughout your child's educational career, take advantage of the assistance offered by parent organizations.
- b. Check with your IEP team or district director of special education to find out if there's a parent group in your area.