WHATCOM takingaction
for Children and Youth with Special
Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)

Communication to School - from Provider

Making a child a "focus of concern (FOC)" for special education evaluation is not always the best first step for doctors or other providers to take when they think a child needs help at school. Instead, recommended steps are to:

1) Communicate specific concerns to the child's teacher and school principal (with copy to parent/caregiver).This tool is designed to help providers communicate to school and request action.

2) If the response from the school doesn't address the child's needs, *then* request that the child be made a FOC for special education evaluation, by checking the yellow NOTE box at the bottom of this tool and sending to Special Ed director, with copy to parent/caregiver, teacher, and principal.

Please see the next page for information and resources. All School District Special Ed Directors are listed on page two of this handout: https://whatcomtakingaction.org/2015/11/12/school-services-for-children-over-five/

Date: _____

Dear: _____

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

I work with your student, the child identified above, as his/her:

☐ Primary Health Care Provider ☐ Therapist ☐ Mental Health Provider

☐ _____ ☐ _____

The child has a diagnosis of _____ and/or concerns in the areas marked below, which could impact his/her education:

☐ Communication/Speech ☐ Gross Motor ☐ Fine Motor ☐ Problem Solving ☐ Adaptive

☐ Vision ☐ Hearing ☐ Behavior ☐ Social ☐ Memory ☐ Stamina ☐ Sleep

☐ Focus/Attention ☐ Anxiety ☐ Cognitive ☐ Learning Disorder

☐ Other medical issues that may impact education include:

Behaviors seen during appointment include: ☐ busy/can't settle ☐ no eye contact ☐ loud vocalizations ☐ physically lashing out ☐ can't keep hands to self ☐ extreme shyness ☐ other:

To explain the basis for my concerns, I've attached the following:

☐ Most recent well-child/visit notes ☐ Developmental screening ☐ Evaluation report

☐ Documented Observations ☐ Social Communication Observation Tool ☐ _____

Due to the above, I'm referring this child to suggest that the school consider:

☐ **Please meet with parent/caregiver to discuss educational implications and a plan for how to help the child in the school context**

☐ **Please contact me to discuss these concerns**

I have discussed my concerns with the child's parents. **I've attached a signed consent allowing me to exchange information with you.**

Thank you,

Referrer's Name: _____ Position: _____

Contact Information: _____

☐ Since this is my second referral to the school, please make this child a Focus of Concern and evaluate for Special Education services. DATE: _____

A particular diagnosis does not automatically mean a child is eligible for Special Education Services. Please see information below, including from American Academy of Pediatrics.

Education Services

There are several public education programs that children and youth with special needs may qualify for. These are federally mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Eligibility for Special Education Services Under IDEA*

Students determined eligible for special education services must meet **all three** of the following criteria:

- The student must have a disability or disabilities.
- The student's disability/disabilities adversely affect educational performance.
- The student's unique needs cannot be addressed through education in general education classes alone – with or without individual accommodations and requires specially designed instruction (SDI).

Eligibility is based on a comprehensive initial evaluation which includes all of the existing data gathered about the student through the referral process and any additional assessments needed to determine whether a student is eligible for special education. The initial evaluation report is used to determine what special education and related services the student needs. *Excerpted from: http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/Eligibility.aspx Visit link for more information.

Making a Referral for Special Education*

What to Do If You Think A Student Needs Special Education Services

- Who can make a referral for special education?
- Does the request need to be in writing?
- What information should be in the written request?
- Who do I submit the referral to?
- What happens after I submit my referral?
- Timelines for Evaluation
- Is the school district required to have a referral meeting?
- How will the district make a decision about evaluating my student?
- What happens if a school district decides not to evaluate my student?

*For details about referring a child for Special Education evaluation by making him/her a Focus of Concern, and answers to the questions above, visit this link: http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/Referral.aspx

Individualized Education Program (IEP)*

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement for a student eligible for special education that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with state and federal laws. The IEP guides your student's learning while in special education. It describes the amount of time that your student will spend receiving special education, any related services your student will receive, and the academic/behavioral goals and expectations for the year.
*Excerpted from: http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/IEP.aspx Visit link for more information.

504 Plan for K-12 Students*

Section 504 provides services and accommodations if a child has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The definition of disability under Section 504 is much broader than under the IDEA, so many students who are not eligible for an IEP may be eligible for extra support under Section 504.
*Excerpted from: http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/504-plans.html?view=ptr&WT.ac=p-ptr Visit link for more information.

Additional Guidance from American Academy of Pediatrics

IEPs vs. 504 plans: Pediatrician's Office Often First Stop for Families Navigating Educational Issues
http://www.aappublications.org/news/2017/01/09/IEP010917

Early Intervention, IDEA Part C Services, and the Medical Home: Collaboration for Best Practice and Best Outcomes   http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/132/4/e1073