

# **REFERRAL TO THE CHILD STUDY TEAM (CST)**

## **What is a Referral?**

A referral is the first step in the special education process. It is a formal written request that a student be evaluated by the CST to determine whether a student is eligible for special education and related services or by the speech/language specialist to determine whether a student is eligible for speech services.

## **Who Can Refer?**

Students may be referred to the CST or for a speech evaluation by the Intervention and Referral services team, school administration, parents and/or community agencies. Parents should submit their written request to the teacher, principal, or director of special services. School staff should submit the written request to the Intervention and Referral Services team.

## **When Should a Student Be Referred?**

Generally, students who present with academic and/or behavioral difficulties are first brought to the attention of the Intervention and Referral Services (I &RS) Committee. This committee will create interventions to address educational difficulties in the general education classroom. Interventions in the general education classroom should be attempted prior to a CST or speech referral.

When interventions in the general education classroom are not appropriate for the student or when interventions are not effective, the student will be referred to the CST or speech/language specialist for evaluation.

## **Once a Student is Referred, What Happens Next?**

Once a referral is received, the parents will be invited to a meeting that will be scheduled within 20 days of receipt of the referral (excluding school vacations other than summer vacation).

Based on a review of available information about the student's educational progress, a decision will be made at this meeting whether a CST or speech evaluation is warranted. If an evaluation is warranted, the nature and scope of the CST or speech evaluation will be discussed. If it appears that the problem can be alleviated with interventions in the general education program and the student has not participated in the I&RS process, there may be a decision not to conduct an evaluation, but to refer the student to the I&RS Committee for development of interventions, suggestions for other interventions for the parent to pursue, or refer the student to the 504 Committee. If the student is already in the I&RS process and an evaluation is not warranted, the I&RS plan can continue or be adjusted.

## **Referral Timelines**

Together the classroom teacher and the (I&RS) Committee may recommend other strategies and building level support that can be utilized in the regular education setting. If the student's difficulties persist after the strategies and/or services have been implemented and documented, a referral to the CST/SLS may be made. A referral is a written document that has been dated by the staff member or administrator who receives the referral. This provides a start date for the first timeline.

The CST/SLS will convene a meeting to consider the evaluation within 20 days from the dated receipt of this request. The parent and referring teacher will meet with the entire CST; if it is a referral to determine eligibility for special education and related services. At this time, the CST will review the student's needs and jointly determine if an evaluation should occur. Meeting attendees will be asked to sign an attendance sheet.

If there is an agreement to perform an evaluation, a written plan for the evaluation is developed at the meeting, describing the nature and scope of the evaluation. Written consent for an evaluation is required by the parent/guardian. This consent for evaluation can be provided at the conclusion of the meeting or the parent may wish to take additional time before providing written consent. Evaluations can only begin after the parent has provided written consent. The district has ninety (90) days from the time written consent is provided to complete the entire evaluation, eligibility, and placement process. Preschool aged students should complete the evaluation and eligibility process in time to receive services upon attaining the age of three.

Parents will receive written notice of the results of the evaluation planning meeting. A decision may be made that an evaluation may not be warranted. Students may be referred back to the I&RS Committee or for other community or school based services.