**Disability Rights Texas Parents’ Guide to the ARD Process: Advocating for Your Child / Video #2**

VIDEO AUDIO

DRTx Logo Hello.

**Parents’ Guide to the ARD Process: Advocating for Your Child**

**Welcome to the Disability Rights Texas video “Parents’ Guide to the ARD Process: Advocating for Your Child.”**

This video was designed to teach parents how to advocate on behalf of their children for special education services and supports and to answer frequently asked questions about the ARD process.

**Evaluating a Child for a Disability**

✓ Parents must agree in writing to the

testing

✓ Must occur within 60 days

✓ Admission Review Dismissal (ARD)

Committee to meet within 30 days

Texas school districts have a legal obligation to identify students with disabilities.

Either the parent or the school may request that the child be evaluated, or tested, for a disability. However, the testing cannot take place until the parent agrees to it in writing.

The testing must take place within 60 days from the date the school receives the parent’s written consent.

When testing is completed, a copy of the report must be provided to the parent at no cost and in the preferred language.

Following testing, the school has 30 days to arrange an ARD Committee meeting to determine if the student is eligible for special education services.

During this time, you may not hear from the school for 60 to 90 days.

**The Parent’s Role in the ARD Process The ARD Committee meeting gives**

parents a voice in determining their child’s individual educational plan, or IEP.

Participating IEP = Individual Education Plan

in the meeting is your choice. If you decide not to attend the meeting, the school can hold the ARD Committee meeting without you.

Remember that you have the right to help ✓ It’s Your Right

determine how your child is educated.

You are there to speak up for your child, so ✓ Speak up

actively participant in the meeting. ✓ Ask questions

Ask questions if you do not understand ✓ Share concerns

something. Voice your opinions. Share your concerns.

✓ Work together to develop the IEP

Parents and school staff should work together to develop an education plan for the student that everyone agrees with.

If you are not happy with your child’s education plan, speak up and ask for changes.

**Parents’ Rights**

✓ At least five days notice

✓ Option to reschedule

✓ Option to attend by telephone or

video conference

✓ Right to a free interpreter

The school must make reasonable efforts to schedule the ARD Committee meeting at a time you can attend.

You should receive written notice at least five school days before the ARD Committee meeting. The notice should include the purpose, place and time of the meeting, and a list of the people attending.

If you want to attend the meeting, but the date, time or location is not convenient, ask the school to reschedule the meeting to a different time or place.

If you cannot attend the meeting in person, the school must offer you other options, such as a telephone conference call or a video conference.

At the meeting, you have a right to use a foreign language interpreter paid for by the school, including an American Sign Language interpreter.

If you need an interpreter, be sure to tell the school before the scheduled meeting.

✓ Right to regular progress reports Parents should receive regular progress

reports on students receiving special education services as often as regular grade reports are distributed.

**Preparing for the ARD Meeting**

✓ Meet with teachers

✓ Review evaluations/test results

✓ List learning goals and issues

✓ List additional supports needed

The ARD Committee meeting can be a little intimidating for parents. The best way to prepare for the meeting is to think about what you want for your child.

You may want to meet with your child’s teachers before the meeting to discuss possible education goals and to learn more about the curriculum for your child’s grade level.

Ask the school for copies of any evaluations, test results or reports that you do not already have, including any other testing the school has done.

Make a list of what you want your child to learn during the year, as well as other educational and behavioral issues you would like to discuss. For example, do you want your child to participate more fully in extracurricular activities or to become more independent?

In addition, list areas where your child needs additional support. For example, does your child need special communication or mobility devices? Be prepared to request assistive technology, if needed.

**The Day of the ARD Committee Meeting**

✓ Arrive early

✓ Bring someone for support

The day of the ARD Committee meeting, arrive early. Give yourself time to relax and focus on what you want to accomplish. Take a pen and paper and copies of your child’s evaluations and test results.

If possible, take along someone else who knows your child and who can support you, such as a friend or parent advocate.

During ✓ Listen to others

the meeting, listen to and consider the ideas of everyone in the group, and be open to compromises and concessions.

✓ Make decisions together

The group should work together to create the student’s individual education plan.

ARD Committee decisions should not be based on a majority vote. Decisions must be agreed upon by all members.

✓ Speak up

Remember, you are there to speak on your child’s behalf.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

***What if my child is not eligible for special education services or the committee makes a decision I do not agree with?***

Texas Education Agency (TEA) www.tea.state.tx.us

What if my child is not eligible for special education services or the committee makes a decision I do not agree with?

The school is required to give parents written notice if a student is denied special education supports and services.

If you disagree with the group’s decision, a 10-day recess will be taken before any further steps are planned.

If after the recess, the committee still cannot agree on a decision, then you can request mediation from the Texas Education Agency.

***The school has offered my child RTI services rather than special education. What Is RTI?***

RTI = Response to Intervention

The school has offered my child RTI services rather than special education. What Is RTI?

Response to Intervention, or RTI, is a form of educational assistance for children who have difficulty learning.

RTI is not the same as special education. RTI is part of regular education and may include tutoring to help children who have fallen behind in school.

A school district cannot use RTI services as a reason to deny parents’ requests for special education testing and services for children with disabilities.

***Where Where should my child’s special***

should my child’s special education education services be provided?

services be provided?

Placement decisions must be made at the ARD Committee meeting and must be based on the student’s unique education needs.

✓ Regular education classroom

Services can be provided in: ✓ Both regular classroom and

• A regular education classroom resource center ✓ Segregated classroom

• A combination of a regular classroom and a special resource center

• A segregated classroom

Least Restrictive Environment

The IEP must always seek to educate students in the least restrictive environment — a regular education classroom with nondisabled peers.

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1-800-252-9108

www.DisabilityRightsTx.org

Disability Rights Texas would like to thank the Texas Bar Foundation for its generous support and for funding production of this video.

For more information on special education supports and services, call our statewide intake line at 1-800-252-9108 or visit our website at www.DisabilityRightsTx.org.