

## **After The Educational Assessment**

### **The School-Based Team Meeting**

After your child has completed the assessment process, the next step will be to meet with the school based team. This team will be made up of teachers and other resource staff who will be involved in planning your child's education.

The findings of the assessment will be discussed at the school-based team meeting. A copy of the assessment report will be given to you. Before the meeting starts you may want to pass around a picture or two of your child and family. This reinforces that your child is much more than an assessment can measure. Have your ideas about your child written down before going into the meeting. Include what you know about your child's way of learning and other information that may be helpful to the team. As you walk into the meeting, be aware of your emotions. You may be feeling worried, or even defensive. Focus on the goals you have for your child. Be a good listener, and let the others at the meeting know you understand their perspective. That does not have to mean you agree with them. If someone says something you don't understand, either about your child or the procedure used to qualify for special supports, don't hesitate to ask. If your spouse is deployed, bring someone with you to the meeting to provide moral support as well as another perspective on your child. This person can also take notes and keep track of the questions you wanted to ask; this can have a very practical benefit in an emotional situation. It is also nice to have someone with whom you can discuss the meeting.

At this point, parents and the school-based team should agree that the information is accurate, complete, and up-to-date. If there is a disagreement, you can choose to have your child evaluated independently at your own expense. If you agree that the report is accurate, the school-based team will begin to develop your child's Individual Education Plan. Each province and territory has a policy that governs education. The team is required to compare the results of the assessment with the definitions of various disabilities that appear in this policy. For more information about the types of needs and services that are identified in your province, refer to your local Ministry of Education website. If you disagree with the decision of the school-based team, you can appeal to the school board.

Adapted from a resource by MilitaryHOMEFRONT.

### **Special Needs Assessments In The School System**

Your child may have a disability you are already aware of, or perhaps you suspect your child has learning problems but are unsure of what to do next. Learning how to navigate the school system can be difficult for any family, but for military families, it is an even greater challenge. For a child in a military family where homes, schools, and neighborhoods frequently change, parents are the constant factor. As you learn the system and interact with professionals, remember that you are the expert on your child and that no one else has a greater knowledge or interest in your child than you do.

## **Identifying Special Needs**

How does a child become involved in Individual Education planning? When a child has a disability or when a parent or teacher notices that a child is not progressing at the rate of his or her peers, there is a referral for assessment, and a decision will be made as to whether or not the child is eligible for special services. If so, a unique Individual Education Plan will be written and followed to ensure that the child will get an appropriate education.

### **Referral**

A referral is simply a request, usually in writing, to have a child assessed for special education services. A parent, teacher, or doctor can make a referral for special education, or it can come from a child development program. This happens when someone involved with the child notices that the child is not making progress or is showing signs of physical or behavioral challenges that are interfering with learning. Any of these people can contact the school system, in writing, and request an assessment. A school-based team determines whether or not the child needs a full assessment. This typically occurs at the child's home school.

### **Assessment**

The school system will use a series of tests and assessments as they try to determine whether or not a child qualifies for special education services. A student's abilities may be assessed in these areas:

- Cognitive: A child's intellect (ability to reason, remember, and understand).
- Behavioral: The ability to pay attention, the quality of child's relationships with children and adults, and the behavior at home as well as school and other settings.
- Physical: The child's health, including vision, hearing, and the ability to communicate and move purposefully.
- Developmental: The child's progress in a number of areas such as understanding and responding to language, social and emotional levels, mobility, and ability to be organized.

The school system must have a procedure that assures the following:

- Parental written consent to testing before the child is evaluated.
- Input from parents about their child's growth and development.
- The results of the assessment will be available to parents.
- A chance to meet with representatives from the school so that parents can discuss the results.
- An opportunity to examine the child's records.
- The assessment is appropriate for the child and without a cultural bias or is not inappropriate because of the child's disability.

- The assessment is given in the language the child is most comfortable with, unless this is not feasible.

It is important that you share your insight about your child to provide a complete picture of your child's personality and capabilities.

### **Assessment from the Child's Perspective**

To many children, being assessed is just another novel experience. The one-on-one attention can be fun; however, if your child feels anxious you can explain that the assessment is to help the teachers know the best way to teach him or her. On the day of the assessment, be sure your child is well rested. If you can, give your child a choice such as, "Which breakfast do you think will help you feel strong, oatmeal or eggs?" or "Would you like to wear your favorite shirt?" After the assessment, ask your child which activities were enjoyable and offer praise for the effort.

### **Waitlists**

Military families sometimes find that they are posted again before they make it to the top of the waitlist. If you are advised that there is a long waitlist for assessment, you can request a referral through your family physician to a psychologist for psycho-educational assessment. The cost may be partly covered through your secondary health insurance (PSHCP). Check with the insurance provider. Also, check with the school to ensure that they will accept external assessment reports.

Adapted from a resource by the [MilitaryHOMEFRONT](#).