



# OKLAHOMA PARENTS CENTER

## Statewide Parent Training and Information

P.O. Box 512 \* Holdenville, Oklahoma 74848

Phone: 877-553-4332 \* Website: [www.OklahomaParentsCenter.org](http://www.OklahomaParentsCenter.org)

## Communicating with Your Child's School

Throughout your child's school years, there is always a need to communicate with school: teachers, administrators, and others concerned with your child's education. There are also times when the school needs to communicate with you. This is particularly true when your child has a disability and is receiving special education services. Some of this communication is informal, such as phone calls, comments in your child's notebook, a chat when picking up your child from school, or at a school function. Other forms of communication are more formal and need to be written down.



Letters and emails provide both you and the school with a record of ideas, concerns, and suggestions. Putting your thoughts on paper gives you the opportunity to take as long as you need to:

- state your concerns;
- think over what you have written;
- make changes; and
- have someone else read over the letter and make suggestions before you send it.

Letters and emails also give people the opportunity to go over what has been suggested or discussed.

*A lot of confusion and misunderstanding can be avoided  
by writing down your thoughts and ideas!*

However, writing a letter or a formal email is a skill. Each one you write will differ according to the situation, the person to whom you are writing, and the issues that you are discussing. In order to better assist parents in writing to a school, the Oklahoma Parents Center (OPC) has adapted "Communicating with your child's school through letter writing" by National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY).

In advocating for your child's needs, it is important to be able to write in a way that is effective and to the point. The Sample Letters below are provided as a guide to help you! If you have any questions or need some help, please give us a call, toll-free at 877-553-4332.

*We are here to assist you in your child's journey through school.*

The sample letters in this guide are organized into groups according to the occasions when you might want to write them.

## **Start, Student Records, and Follow-up**

1. Discuss a problem
2. Request a copy of your child's records
3. Write a follow-up letter
4. Give positive feedback

## **Evaluation, IEPs, and Placement**

5. Request an initial evaluation for special education services
6. Request an independent educational evaluation
7. Request a meeting to review your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)
8. Request that your child's placement be changed
9. Request a re-evaluation of your child

## **Using Safeguards to Resolve Disputes**

10. Request prior written notice
11. Request mediation
12. File a due process complaint
13. File a state complaint



## **Important things to remember:**

- Some special education guidelines give the amount of time a school has to respond to a parent's request, some don't.
- If you have not heard from the school within 10 school days, give them a call to make sure the school received your letter or email.
- Keep your letters or emails short and to the point.
- Use spell check or ask someone reliable to look over your letter for errors.
- Give the facts without letting anger, blame or other negative emotions creep in.
- After you write your first draft, don't immediately send it. Read it again before sending.
- The OPC is here to help you. Give us a call at 877-553-4332!

*Always keep a copy of each letter or email you send!*

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## Writing to Discuss a Problem

Sometimes your child may have a specific problem at school. You may have talked to your child's teacher about this concern or even sent notes back and forth. If it seems like nothing is happening to resolve your concern, then you might want to write a formal letter. Perhaps the

informal communication hasn't been as clear as you think. By writing a letter or email, the school will learn that you consider the matter to be an important one that needs to be addressed.

You can write about any concern! There are no

rules about what type of problem you can write about. Any school problem is worth writing about if it is having a negative impact on your child.

Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Daytime telephone number

Name of Principal  
Name of School  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Principal's name),

In this paragraph say who you are and give your child's full name and current class placement. Say something positive about your child's situation here, before you state your reason for writing.

BRIEFLY, explain why you are writing. Give *relevant* history and facts that support your concerns. (For example, your 3rd grader is struggling in school and you want to ask for help. You might say that your child's school work has been getting worse throughout the year. That fact *is* relevant. Talking about something from your child's infancy probably isn't.)

In this paragraph state what you would like to have happen or what you would like to see changed. You may BRIEFLY say what you would *not* like, or what has been tried and not worked. However, spend most of this paragraph saying what you want.

Say what type of response you would prefer. For instance, do you need to meet with someone; do you want a return letter or email, or will a phone call be preferable?

Finally, give your daytime telephone number and state that you look forward to hearing from the person soon or give a date ("Please respond by the 15th"). End the letter with "Thank you for your attention to this matter."

Sincerely,

Your name

cc: Your child's teacher  
Other staff



### Note:

The "cc:" at the bottom of the letter means you are sending a copy of your letter to the people listed after the cc.

If you write the Director of Special Education, you should copy the Principal. If you write to the Principal, you should include your child's teacher.

It lets people involved know your concerns and that you are taking steps to resolve these concerns.

# Requesting Your Child's Records

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, better known as IDEA, gives you the right to look at all of your child's records. This includes records about his or her identification, evaluation, educational placement, and special education program.

You also have the right to ask the school to explain and interpret the records for you. You may ask the school to give you a copy of your child's records; they may charge you a reasonable fee for making any copies, but cannot charge you for retrieving the records or you looking at them.

School records contain valuable information about your child's strengths and areas of need.

Here are some reasons you might have for requesting a copy of your child's records:

- Reviewing records to ensure they are correct and contain all necessary information.
- When your family is moving to a new district, records may need to be sent.
- When you're taking your child for an independent evaluation, copies of past records may be useful.
- The records may help the staff at other programs your child attends (like camp, tutors, or in-hospital schools) design their activities.
- Postsecondary education programs may need to see copies of your child's records.
- It's a good idea to have a copy for your home files, especially if your child is finishing school.

Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Daytime telephone number

Name of Person to Whom you are Writing  
Title  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (name),

I am writing to schedule a time to come and review all of my child's records. My son/daughter, (child's name), is in the (\_\_\_\_) grade at (name of school), in (teacher's name) class. I will also need copies of some or all of these records.

Please let me know where and when I can come in to see the records. I need these records by (date). You can reach me during the day at (give your phone number).

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Your name



# Writing a Follow-up Letter

When you have written a letter or sent an email making a request, you should get a response from the school, either by telephone or in writing, within a reasonable amount of time. In some cases, "reasonable" is defined...in other cases, the timelines are not exact. So, be reasonable in your expectations.

But if you feel too much time has passed (10 school days or so) without receiving a response to your letter, then call and ask if your letter (or email) has been received.

If you are sure the school has received your letter (for instance, if you sent it certified mail), then ask when you can expect an answer.

More than likely, when you call you will talk to a secretary or administrative assistant. Leave a message for the person you wrote to; ask that person to call you back.

If your request still goes unanswered, they you may want to write again. It's useful to enclose a copy of your original letter (or email) with this letter. Be sure NOT to send your only copy. Remember, you always need to have a copy for your records.



Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Daytime telephone number

Name of Person to Whom You Originally Wrote  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (name),

I wrote to you on (date) and also called to make sure you had received my letter. I left a message for you to call me back on (date), but since I have not heard from you, I thought it best to write again.

I am writing to request...

Enclosed is a copy of my first letter to you.

I would like to hear from you by (give a date, 3-5 school days). Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter

Sincerely,

Your name

Enclosure

## Writing a Positive Feedback Letter

Once you have begun to write letters, be sure to write when things are going well, too!

If a teacher, therapist, or other staff member has made good things happen for your child, let them and their supervisors know. Everyone likes and needs compliments and encouragement from time to time.

Positive feedback is what keeps good schools running well. Just as you want to know “how it’s going,” so does the school staff. Always take time to let someone know that they have made an impact.

Good communication, team work, and effective schools take a lot of work. There is an old saying that goes, “Things can go wrong all by themselves, but you have to work hard to make things go right.” This statement applies doubly to maintaining a successful parent-school relationship.

Be sure your child’s teacher(s), principal, and superintendent also hear from you when things are going right.



Today’s Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Daytime telephone number

Name of Person to Whom You Are Writing

Title

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear (name),

I am writing to let you know how very pleased I am with the education my son/daughter, (child’s name), is receiving at (name of school).

(Child’s name) has had great success with (briefly say what is going right). In particular, (name the professionals working with your child and how they have made a difference).

I look forward to (child’s name) making continued progress. Thank you for all your efforts, and those of your staff.

Sincerely,

Your name

cc: If you write to the Superintendent or Director of Special Education, make sure to copy the people who directly deserve recognition for your child’s success – the principal, teachers, and other staff.

# Requesting an Initial Evaluation for Special Education Services

If your child has been consistently struggling in school, his or her problems may be due to a disability. Anyone can refer the student for an educational evaluation, including you.

The purpose of the initial evaluation is to see if the child has a disability and needs special education services.

This evaluation is free of charge!

To request an initial evaluation, first, you must submit a written request to your child's school, much like the sample letter below.

After receiving an evaluation request letter and supporting documents, the district must respond formally through Written Notice that describes any evaluation procedures they plan to use.

Before your child's evaluation takes place, you must first provide written permission or parental consent.

Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Daytime telephone number

Name of Principal  
Name of School  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Principal's or Administrator's name),

I am writing to request that my son/daughter, (child's name), be evaluated for special education services. I am worried that (child's name) is not doing well in school and believe he/she may need special services in order to learn. (Child's name) is in the ( ) grade at (name of school). (Teacher's name) is his/her teacher.

Specifically, I am worried, because (child's name) does/does not (give a few direct examples of your child's problems at school).

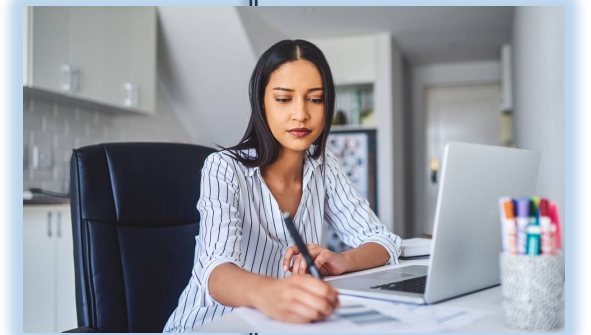
We have tried the following to help (child's name): (If you or the school have done anything extra to help your child, briefly state it here).

I understand that I have to give written permission in order for (child's name) to be evaluated. Before the evaluation begins, I have some questions about the process that I need to have answered (list any questions you may have). I would be happy to talk with you about (child's name). You can send me information or call me during the day at (daytime telephone number). Thank you for your prompt attention to my request.

Sincerely,

Your name

Cc: your child's principal (if letter is addressed to an administrator)  
your child's teacher(s)



**Once the parent consent form is signed, the initial evaluation must be completed within 45 school days.**

# Requesting an Independent Educational Evaluation at Public Expense

The IDEA gives parents the right to have their child evaluated independently. This means you have the right to have your child evaluated by someone other than the staff who work for the school system.

Remember, the purpose of an evaluation is to see if your child has a disability and, if so, what their special educational needs are.

In some cases, you may pay for the Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). In other cases, the school system may pay for it, which is called an IEE at public expense.

If you want the school to pay for the IEE, you will need to make your request BEFORE any independent testing is done.

A few reasons why parents may request an IEE at the Public Expense would be:

- You believe the original evaluation was incorrect or incomplete and additional tests are needed.
- The evaluation was not done in the child's native language.
- The evaluation was not completed with needed accommodations (for example, in braille or sign language).

Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Daytime telephone number

Name of Person to Whom You are Writing  
Title  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (name),

My son/daughter, (child's name), is in the ( ) grade at (name of school), in (teacher's name) class. He/She was evaluated for special education services in (month/year). I am writing to request an Independent Educational Evaluation at public expense, for the following reasons: (BRIEFLY list your reason(s). Be very specific. For example,)

"I disagree with the evaluation results because..."

"The evaluation should have included..."

"Evaluation should have been done in the area of..."

I would like this Independent Educational Evaluation at the public expense to be done as quickly as possible so that we can fully address (child's name) needs. Please respond as soon as possible and send me copies of the school's guidelines for this. My daytime telephone number is (give your phone number). Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

cc: your child's principal  
your child's teacher



Once a parent requests an IEE at public expense, the school must do one of the following without unnecessary delay:

1. Provide the LEA's IEE criteria and information about where an IEE may be obtained; or
2. Request a due process hearing without undue delay to show that the school's evaluation is appropriate.

**Results from an IEE must be considered by your child's IEP team when decision's are made regarding your child's free appropriate public education (FAPE), identification, eligibility, or placement.**



# Requesting a Meeting to Review the Individualized Education Program

If your child is receiving special education services, he or she must have a written plan known as an Individualized Education Program or IEP.

When a child has an IEP, the IDEA requires the child's IEP team to review the document at least once a year.

Within the IEP, you will find your child's annual goals along with the special education services they will receive. You are a member of the team that writes your child's IEP. As a member of the IEP team, can ask that your child's IEP be reviewed and revised at any time.

Some of the reasons why a parent might request an IEP review meeting would be:

- Your child may have met their yearly goal.
- Your child is not making progress in one or more annual goals.
- You feel that your child requires more services or different services to make progress.
- You feel that your child no longer requires special education services.
- Finally, your child has experienced a significant life change such as illness, injury, or trauma.



Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Daytime telephone number

Name of Your Child's Special Education Teacher  
Name of School  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Teacher's name),

I am writing to request an IEP review meeting. I would like to discuss making some changes in (child's name)'s IEP. I am concerned about (state your reasons, but don't go into detail about specific changes you want to make – save those for the meeting).

I would also like to have (names of specialists or other staff) attend. I think his/her/their ideas about the changes we may need to make will be valuable.

I can arrange to meet with you and the other members of the IEP team on (days) between (give a range of time, such as between 2:00 and 4:00). Please let me know what time would be best you.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. My daytime telephone number is (give your phone number). Thank for your help.

Sincerely,

Your name

cc: specialists or other staff

# Requesting a Change of Placement

Placement means where your child's IEP is carried out. Depending on your child's needs, his or her placement may be in general education, in a special education classroom, your home, in a hospital or institution, or in another setting. IDEA strongly prefers placement in the general education classroom but does not mandate it.

Placement is an IEP team decision. Therefore, when you request a change in placement, you are actually requesting an IEP review meeting to discuss your child's needs and where your child's needs will be best serviced.



Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your name

Street address

City, State, Zip Code

Daytime telephone number

Name of Principal or Special Education Director

Name of School

Street address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Principal's or Special Education Administrator's name)

I am writing to request a meeting to discuss a change in placement for my son/daughter, (child's name). He/She is currently in the (\_\_\_\_) grade in (teacher's name) class. I feel he/she needs to be in (name of alternative placement if you know: otherwise describe the type of placement you feel is more appropriate for your child, such as your neighborhood school, a center-based program, general education class, or special class).

I am most concerned about (keep this paragraph brief and mention your child's unmet needs, not problems with individual people).

I would also like to have (name of teacher(s) and/or any specialists you would like from the current and/or requested placement) attend this meeting.

I can arrange to meet with the rest of the IEP team on (days) between (give a range of time, such as between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.). Please let me know what time would be best.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. My daytime telephone number is (give your phone number). Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Your name

cc. your child's principal (if letter is addressed to an administrator)  
your child's teacher(s)  
specialists or other staff

You may want to request a change in your child's placement if their needs are not being met, such as:

- changes in your child's needs;
- current class size is too large or too small;
- current class is too academically challenging or not academic demanding;
- the placement does not meet your child's social or emotional needs;
- the building is too difficult for your child to get around;
- or
- Any other reason that this class placement is not working out successfully.

# Requesting a Re-evaluation for Your Child

In order to ensure students continue to be eligible for special education services and that they continue to receive the services need, IDEA requires that re-evaluations occur at least every three (3) years.

IDEA does not define a timeline for re-evaluations, but implies it will be done prior to a renewed IEP. If your child is nearing that 3-year mark or if you

have concerns, now is the time to request new evaluations.

Before the re-evaluation process begins, the IEP team, including the parent, reviews the existing information and identifies what additional information, if any, is needed.



Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Daytime telephone number

Name of Principal or Special Education Administrator  
Name of School  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Principal's or Administrator's name),

I am writing to request that my son/daughter, (child's name), be re-evaluated for special education services. (Child's name) is in the (\_\_\_\_) grade at (name of school). (Teacher's name) is his/her teacher.

I am concerned that my child is not making progress in his/her current special education program. I am writing to request that he/she be re-evaluated so that the IEP team can consider the most appropriate programs and services for (child's name).

I would like to participate with the rest of the IEP team in the review to determine what data and testing are needed. I would also like to know when the testing will be held and when any meetings will be scheduled so I can attend.

I understand that I have to give written permission in order for (child's name) to be re-evaluated. Please send that to me as soon as possible so I can sign and return to you. Thank you so much for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Your name

cc: Your child's principal (if letter is addressed to an administrator)  
Your child's teacher(s)

A re-evaluation may be needed sooner than three (3) years if one of the following is present:

- A parent or teacher requests it.
- The IEP team needs more information to address concerns or make decisions about your child's education program.
- The IEP team is considering removing your child from special education services.

# Requesting Prior Written Notice

There are certain times when the school must put in writing its decisions about your child's education and the reasons for those decisions. This communication is called Prior Written Notice (PWN).

**The district is required to send you a prior written notice after a decision has been made, but before implementing the decision.**

The school system is supposed to automatically provide you with prior written notice whenever they want to (or refuse to):

- Evaluate your child,
- Change of your child's disability identification,
- Change your child's placement, or
- Change the way in which your child is provided with a free appropriate public education.

However, sometimes the school may tell you its decision over the phone, in a meeting, or in a conversation. It is best that you always ask for the decision to be given in writing using Prior Written Notice.

Today's date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Daytime telephone number

Name of Person to Whom you are Writing  
Title  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (name),

At our meeting (or during our phone conversation) on (insert date), we discussed my child's (evaluation, eligibility, placement, IEP, services, etc.). I requested (insert what you requested) and was denied (or I was told the school intends to (insert what the school intends to do)), but I have never received any information about this decision in writing. I am requesting prior written notice regarding (be very specific about the issue/decision you want the school to respond to - list out the issue/decision/refusal).

It is my understanding that according to 34 CFR §300.503, prior written notice must include the following:

1. A description of what the school is proposing or refusing to do;
2. An explanation as to why the school proposes or refuses this action;
3. A description of any other options the school considered and an explanation as to why those options were rejected;
4. A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the school used as a basis for this decision;
5. A description of any other relevant factors that went into this decision;
6. Information on how I can obtain a copy of procedural safeguards and a full explanation of those safeguards; and
7. Information on sources I can contact for help understanding IDEA.

I look forward to receiving a detailed response to my request as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Your Name

cc: the principal, supervisor, or special education administrator  
other members of the meeting



## Requesting Mediation

Anytime you have a serious disagreement with the school and you feel it isn't getting resolved, you may request mediation. In mediation, you and school personnel sit down with an impartial third person (called a mediator), talk openly about the areas where you disagree, and try to reach an agreement. Mediation is voluntary, so both parties must agree to meet with a mediator.

One of the chief benefits is that mediation allows you and the school to state your concerns and work together to reach a solution that focuses on the needs of the student and is acceptable to both of you.

For more information, visit the Special Education Resolution Center at [www.okserc.org/mediation](http://www.okserc.org/mediation).



### ***Parent Agreement to Mediate and Request for Mediation***

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the written materials describing mediation services and have been fully informed that the mediator is not providing the parent(s), the school, or the child with legal representation. I also understand that the mediator is not providing counseling or therapy services.

I am choosing to pursue mediation to try to reach an agreement on some or all of the issues regarding my child's special education program. I understand that the mediation process will involve the mediator's speaking privately to the parent(s) and the school representative(s). I understand that the mediator(s), acting as a neutral third party, will work with each of us to develop an agreement that is mutually beneficial.

If an agreement is reached, I understand that the signed agreement will be shared with other individuals working with my child. I understand that discussions during the mediation session will be confidential and will not be used during subsequent proceedings. I, therefore, agree not to call the mediator(s) as a witness in any future proceedings pertaining to the child's case.

The following is a summary of the issue(s) I would like discussed at the mediation with the school:

\_\_\_\_\_

I have received a copy of my "*Parents Rights in Special Education.*"

Student \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SUBMIT TO:**

Special Education Resolution Center (SERC)

Fax: 918-270-2062

9726 E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, Suite 203, Tulsa, OK 74146

# Filing a Due Process Complaint

Due Process is one approach that parents and schools can use to resolve disagreements. Basically, in a due process hearing, you and the school present evidence before an impartial third person called a hearing officer. The hearing officer then decides how to resolve the problem.

Generally speaking, when the family and school disagree, it is important for both sides to first discuss their concerns and try to reach a compromise. Remember, the goal is to provide an appropriate education for your child. There are many options when deciding what an appropriate education is, and some trial and error may be necessary to develop a successful program for your child.

However, if you and the school have fully communicated, understand each other's positions, tried such strategies as IEP meetings and/or mediation, and you still disagree, you may want to request a due process hearing.

Some reasons why a parent might file for due process include:

- The school refuses to evaluate your child.
- You disagree with the eligibility decision.
- You disagree with the services or goals in the IEP.
- The school refuses to provide a related service, modification, or supplementary aid you think your child needs.
- You disagree with the placement decision.

In Oklahoma, the Special Education Resolution Center (SERC) will provide a highly-trained hearing officer who will preside over the hearing and whose decisions have the effect of law and are binding upon the parties participating in the hearing.

Oklahoma's due process system has 2 types of hearings, a regular due process hearing and an expedited due process hearing:

- A regular due process hearing is an administrative hearing to resolve disputes on any matter related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, and the provision of a FAPE.
- An expedited due process hearing is an administrative hearing to resolve disputes concerning discipline. The expedited hearing will occur within 20 school days of the request, with a decision rendered within 10 school days of the hearing.

Information in the complaint must be kept confidential. Each state is required to have a model form to help parents write a due process complaint. You are not required to use the model form.

There's a lot to know about due process complaints, resolution meetings, and due process hearings, far too much to explain it all here. You can find more information at:

- Due Process in Special Education: Guidelines for Parents and School Administrators  
<https://sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/SpecEd-DueProcess.pdf>
- Oklahoma Special Education Handbook  
[https://sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Oklahoma%20Special%20Education%20Handbook%20\(live\).pdf](https://sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Oklahoma%20Special%20Education%20Handbook%20(live).pdf)

For more information, visit the Special Education Resolution Center at [www.okserc.org/due-process](http://www.okserc.org/due-process).



## **Regular Due Process Complaint**

<https://okserc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Due-Process-Complaint-Notice-Parent-2.pdf>

## **Expedited Due Process Complaint**

<https://okserc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Expedited-Due-Process-Complaint-Notice-Parent-2.pdf>

# Filing a Formal State Complaint (Request for Complaint Investigation)

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), you have the right to file a complaint when you believe that the state or school district has violated a requirement of the IDEA.

The State Education Agency (SEA) or the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services (OSDE-SES) must resolve your complaint within 60 calendar days (not business days) from the day they receive it, unless there are exceptional circumstances with respect to the complaint.

The IDEA regulations for State Complaint Procedures may be found at 34 CFR § 300.151-153. Parents and schools are encouraged to utilize mediation to resolve special education disputes. Such participation is voluntary.

A complaint must include the following information:

1. Current date.
2. Name, address, and telephone number of the person making the complaint (or available contact information).
3. The signature of the person making the complaint.
4. If alleging violations regarding a specific student, the name and address of the student involved (or available contact information in the case of a homeless student or family).
5. The school and local educational agency (LEA) or other education agency that is the subject of the complaint.
6. One or more statements (allegations) that the LEA has violated one or more requirements of IDEA Part B.
7. The facts and/or a description of the events that support each allegation.
8. Proposed resolution of the problem or the relief sought to the extent known and available to the party at the time.
9. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one year prior to the date that the complaint is received.

The OSDE-SES has created a form to assist individuals in filing a complete complaint. It is located at:

<https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/Request%20for%20complaint%20investigation%20form.pdf>

The use of this form is optional, however, all Complaint Investigation Requests must include all required elements. The OSDE-SES will notify you if your submission is not sufficient and/or if additional information is required.

The OSDE-SES will accept a complaint received by mail, fax, or hand delivery. You may submit your concerns that meet all of the above requirements to the OSDE-SES address listed on the complaint form or the Sample Letter provided on the next page by the Oklahoma Parents Center.

You must forward a copy of the complaint to the school district (LEA) or public agency serving the child at the same time the complaint is filed with the OSDE-SES.

It is important to note, if you write a complaint on an issue that is also part of a current due process hearing, the OSDE-SES will not investigate the issue. The due process hearing takes precedence over the State complaint process.

To get more information, you can contact the Oklahoma State Department of Education Office of Special Education Services' (OSDE-SES) by:

- calling 405-521-3351,
- visiting the OSDE's website at <https://sde.ok.gov/special-education-dispute-resolution>, or
- found in the Oklahoma Special Education Handbook Chapter 13, Section 4.



## **Sample - Filing a Formal State Complaint (Request for Complaint Investigation)**

Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Daytime telephone number

Oklahoma State Department of Education

Office of Special Education Services

Attn: Dispute Resolution

2500 N Lincoln Blvd Ste. 412

Oklahoma City OK 73105

Or via Fax at 405-522-3503

Dear (name),

I am writing to file a complaint on behalf of my son/daughter, (child's name), regarding his/her education in the (name of school district). The nature of my complaint is as follows:

- Explain the problem with BRIEF statements of fact.
- Consider listing the facts that support your complaint with bullets or numbers.

For the above reasons, I believe the school district is in violation of certain requirements in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, specifically: (list the requirements of IDEA you feel the school system has violated. For example,

"The school system has violated the following requirements of the IDEA:

- to consider whether my child needs assistive technology services or devices, as required by Section 300.346;
- to make available to my child assistive technology services and devices, as required by Section 300.308; and
- to include in my child's IEP a statement of the special education, related services and supplementary aids and services, including assistive technology, that he/she needs as required by Section 300.347."

Enclosed are copies of relevant documents and correspondence I have sent to and received from the school district concerning this matter. These documents are (List the documents you have enclosed, giving the date sent, by whom, to whom, and the issue discussed.)

Please provide me with copies of any information you obtain in the process of investigating my complaint. If you need further information or clarification on my complaint, I can be reached at (give your phone number). Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your name

cc: school district special education director  
your child's principal  
your advocate/attorney