

CHAPTER 5. SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOL-AGE STUDENTS AT RISK: PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

What can I do if my child is having difficulty in school?

Parents who question whether their child is making satisfactory progress in the classroom should request a conference with the child's teacher, principal, and/or counselor. If it is felt that additional assistance for the student is needed, parents or teachers can request that he/she be brought to the attention of the Student Study Team (SST) or Child Study Team.

What is the Student Study Team (SST)?

The SST is a general education process that is used at every school to address concerns about students' progress. It uses a systematic approach to assist students who struggling in general education classes. Although it is a major vehicle for assimilating and reviewing identification and screening information for students who are "at risk," it does not have a special education focus.

The SST is responsible for ensuring that all general education programs and modifications have been exhausted before a special education referral is made.

SST recommendations at your child's school may include:

- Changes in your child's program or modification to the curriculum,
- Changes in or modification of education materials,
- Changes in the regular teacher's teaching methods (instructional style, behavior management, etc.),
- Changes in home school communication, such as homework assignments,
- Your child's participation in other programs and services available at your child's school (such as limited English proficiency language programs, or Title I reading programs).



The SST is a multi-disciplinary group process that may include the following participants:

- Referring Teacher
- Parent (You are encouraged to participate in the Student Study Team process if you are notified of such a meeting regarding your child.)
- Principal or his/her designee
- Resource Teacher
- Department Chairman (High School)
- Resource Specialist
- Others as needed (Psychologist, Language/Speech Specialist, Nurse)

What if these interventions do not work for my child?



Referrals from general education to special education are only made after extensive efforts are used by the school staff to improve a child's educational or developmental growth. If classroom modifications and strategies tried as a result of the SST process do not appear to remedy their child's learning difficulties, parents may refer their child for consideration for special education. They may do so in writing or orally, but it is best to make a referral in writing so there is a record of it and the date the request was made. If you are unsure about how to write the request staff are required to assist you in putting your request in writing. Appropriate professional persons, such as medical doctors and certified therapists, may refer a child, as may community service agency representatives and concerned members of the public. Students may even refer themselves. In fact, the school district's

identification procedures must include systematic methods of soliciting referrals of children from such individuals and agencies.

Individuals who refer a child for consideration for special education services should state clearly the specific concerns about the child that prompted the referral, that is; they should state why they think the child may have a disability that makes the child eligible for special education. Please see sample letter on page 28.

Who might benefit from a referral for consideration for special education services?

Children having significant difficulties or delays in the areas of vision, hearing, speech and/or language, overall cognitive or motor development, or those who have emotional disturbance, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorder, multiple disabilities, or other health impairments may benefit from a referral for special education evaluation, intervention, and/or related services. (See eligibility criteria in Chapter 6.)

Children whose achievement is being significantly affected by learning disabilities (with or without Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may be evaluated for special education eligibility after a series of prescribed classroom interventions, modifications, and supplemental aides and services have been attempted, documented, and have been proven to be inadequate or unsuccessful over time.