

Introduction: How to Use This Guide

This guide is written for parents of children who receive or are suspected of needing special education and related services, teachers, education administrators and professionals, and service providers. Special education and related services are supports and services provided to children with disabilities. Certain procedures must be followed to determine if a child is eligible to receive special education services. Those procedures are written in federal and state laws. Special education laws and procedures can be complicated. This guide explains the requirements in a way that relates to all groups—parents, school professionals, and others.

The Guide contains a wide variety of information about special education. Some information may be relevant to you now; other information might be helpful in the future. Whenever you refer to the guide, we hope you'll find it of value in expanding your knowledge of special education. As your knowledge expands, we hope your ability to make decisions that improve your child's academic outcomes increases.

In addition to the main text, we've provided sidebars throughout the book to provide you with important information and other resources. The sidebars are color-coded for specific types of information:

Worth a Look

The main legal provisions that address Child Find are:

20 USC Sec. 1412(a)(3)
34 CFR Sec. 300.111
23 IAC 226.100

A green sidebar will contain additional information and resources for you to review if you're interested in learning more about a topic.

Tips for Parents

Don't forget to write a letter to request an evaluation. Asking for one is not enough!

A blue sidebar will contain tips and suggestions primarily for parents. However, the information contained here can be useful to everyone.

Important Reminder

The determination of eligibility shall be made and the IEP shall be completed in 60 school days (or less) following the date of written consent from the parent.

A red sidebar will contain important information that must be kept in mind when thinking about the topic. This is information that both parents and district people need to remember.

As you learn more about special education and talk to other parents, teachers, and school administrators, the whole process becomes easier and less overwhelming.

The guide now contains a set of quick reference topic charts. A number of sections of this book have a corresponding chart in Appendix B. The charts are formatted as outlined below:

Topic (Lists the main topic.)	
Citation(s)	Lists the citation in federal and/or state law: 34 CFR 300 - Means you can find it in the federal regulations. 23 IAC 226 - Means you can find it in the state regulations. 20 USC 14-- - Means you can find it in IDEA 105 ILCS - Means you can find it in the Illinois School Code (state law)
What Does it Mean?	Plain language wording about the law.
What Needs to Happen?	A description of the event or events that should occur because of the law.
What Parents Need to Know or Do	Tells what the school or the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team should do and contains ideas and tips for parents.

Finally, Appendix C is a glossary of key terms with their definitions and common acronyms. Refer to Appendix C whenever you run across a special term or phrase that you need to know about in more detail.

Please keep in mind that the beginning of anything new is always the most difficult time. But we believe that this guide will help you to *begin* understanding this sometimes very complicated process.

Please note the contents of the educational rights guide are not to serve, and should not be construed, as legal advice from the Illinois State Board of Education. If you have specific concerns regarding your particular situation, you should consult with legal or other resources as appropriate.