



CALIFORNIA STATE IEP GUIDE

Special Education, SELPA, Assessment Plan & SDC Programs

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About This Guide

How to Use This Guide

- Terminology table: state-specific terms and what they mean in plain language
- Timeline differences: how this state's deadlines differ from federal IDEA
- State Education Agency: contact information for complaints and due process
- iepguide.org guidance: specific steps for using iepguide.org in this state
- Placement checklist: step-by-step placement timeline using iepguide.org

■ iepguide.org — School Placement Research Tool

Search by state, city, district, or school to compare SWD %, SDC program types, severity levels served, and specialist staff availability at iepguide.org

KEY TIMELINE DIFFERENCES IN CALIFORNIA

- Referral to Assessment Plan sent: 15 CALENDAR days (same as federal)
- Parent signs Assessment Plan to IEP meeting: 60 CALENDAR days (California combines the evaluation and IEP into one 60-day window — stricter than federal)
- California's 60-day timeline includes BOTH completing the evaluation AND holding the IEP meeting — the federal standard only requires the evaluation within 60 days
- Annual IEP review: within 12 months of last IEP date
- Triennial Review: every 3 years — district must seek consent before new assessments
- If a child transfers from another California district: the receiving district must hold an IEP meeting within 30 days

STATE EDUCATION AGENCY — CALIFORNIA

- California Department of Education — Special Education Division
- Website: cde.ca.gov/sp/se
- Phone: (916) 445-4613
- Complaints: CDE Procedural Safeguards Referral Service — (800) 926-0648
- Mediation and Due Process: Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) — oah.dgs.ca.gov

HOW TO USE iepguide.org IN CALIFORNIA

- **Search iepguide.org by California city, district, or county** to see which schools have Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe SDC programs, what their SWD % is, and which specialist staff are physically on-site versus shared across schools.
- **Before the Assessment Plan meeting:** search your neighborhood schools to understand the range of SDC programs available in your SELPA before agreeing to any proposed placement.
- **California's 60-day combined timeline is tight.** Use iepguide.org to research school options in the first two weeks after signing the Assessment Plan — you will have limited time between the evaluation report and the IEP meeting.
- **If the district proposes an NPS (Non-Public School):** use iepguide.org to first verify what public school options exist in your SELPA with appropriate SDC programs before agreeing to an out-of-district placement.
- Compare DIS service frequency (speech, OT, PT) across schools in your district — iepguide.org surfaces staffing data that shows which schools have on-site versus traveling specialists

PLACEMENT TIMELINE — USING iepguide.org IN CALIFORNIA

- STEP 1 — Before signing the Assessment Plan, search iepguide.org for your city or district to see what SDC programs exist at your neighborhood school and nearby schools
- STEP 2 — When the school proposes a placement at the IEP meeting, search the specific school on iepguide.org to check SWD %, program type, and on-site specialist staff
- STEP 3 — If a Moderate/Severe SDC is recommended, verify on iepguide.org that the proposed school actually has a Mod/Severe program — not just a Mild/Moderate one
- STEP 4 — Compare the proposed school's specialist staffing (SLP, OT, psychologist, nurse) against your current school using iepguide.org before agreeing to any school transfer
- STEP 5 — If the district proposes an NPS, you have the right to request placement in a public school SDC first — use iepguide.org to identify public options before accepting NPS referral