



How Will I Know If My Child Needs Special Education?

Psychological Evaluation

If you suspect that your child may be in need of special education services, the first contact should be your child's guidance counselor. Through individual and group contacts, the guidance counselor attempts to facilitate students' social, emotional, and academic growth. The counselor is responsible for a variety of testing programs, such as readiness evaluations, achievement testing, and diagnostic testing. Individual counseling is available to children and parents as needed.

If the necessity arises, a student may be recommended for further evaluation. This process, known as a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation is completed by a certified school psychologist. The school psychologist at Westmont Hilltop School District is Mrs. Cindy McCombie. You may contact Mrs. McCombie at (814)255-8720. Mrs. McCombie services all Westmont Hilltop students in grades K-12.

A pre-requisite to the MDE process is participation in the Instructional Support Program. MDE may also be initiated at parent request. After the evaluation, the school presents a full report of findings in a document entitled an Evaluation Report (ER). If a student qualifies for special education programming, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed by a team.

When a child is found to be eligible for special education, an IEP (Individual Education Program) team meeting will be scheduled. Prior to the scheduling of that meeting, school personnel will design a plan to include parents in training opportunities that will help the entire team to understand the specially designed instruction and the supports and services that will be needed to help the child succeed in school.

The plan for each parent will be individualized according to the needs of his/her child. The Individual Education Program for Parents will be presented as follows: Prior to the IEP, parents will be given access to information specific to the child's needs. During the first IEP meeting, or immediately after, this information will be further discussed among the members of the team. Specialists who will be involved in carrying out the specially designed instruction for students will be invited to provide instruction to the team at this time. Follow-up questions will be invited, and parents will be provided with contact information and resources to learn more about their child's specific disability and/or the instruction, supports, and services that the child will experience through his Individual Education Program.