

# *Rhea County Department of Education*

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## **GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS (IEE)**

According to state and federal special education laws, parents/guardians have the right to an independent educational evaluation of their child at public expense if they disagree with an evaluation of the child conducted by the district. The Rhea County Department of Education has established the following procedure for obtaining an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) and criteria for the selection of an appropriate evaluator. In accordance with applicable law, these criteria also apply to outside evaluations performed by an outside evaluator selected by, and/or, at the request of the Rhea County Department of Education.

### **Definitions**

An **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)** is an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the Rhea County Department of Education, which is the public agency responsible for the education of the child.

An **evaluation** means the formal testing and/or assessment procedures used to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services the child needs.

**Public expense** means the district either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parents/guardians.

### **Procedure**

Upon receipt of a request for an IEE by a parent/guardian, the school district will either: (a) initiate due process and a hearing to show that the evaluation conducted by the district of the child is appropriate; or (b) provide an independent educational evaluation at public expense. If the school district requests a hearing and the final decision is that the district's evaluation of the child is appropriate, the parent/guardian still has the right to an independent educational evaluation, but not at public expense.

If, in response to the parent/guardian request for an IEE, the district decides to procure an independent evaluation, the district will provide names, addresses, and phone numbers of possible IEE evaluators who meet the district's criteria (*as set forth below*). The list will identify those evaluators who, in the district's judgment, are qualified to perform the evaluation requested by the parents. Parents may also select evaluators not included on the district's list, provided they fully satisfy all the criteria set forth below.

Parents will be expected to contact the evaluator they have selected to conduct the IEE in a timely manner to schedule any necessary appointments.

### **Criteria for Outside Evaluators** (*Independent Evaluators and Outside Evaluators Selected by the Rhea County Department of Education*)

Evaluators chosen to conduct independent evaluations must meet **all** the criteria established by the district as follows:

## I.

### A. Criteria for an Independent Educational Evaluation:

1. The parent(s) and District must mutually agree to the parameters of an IEE (i.e., the areas to be assessed) and to the independent evaluator(s) who will conduct the evaluation.
2. Independent evaluators must be licensed by the TN Board of Teaching or by an accredited organization or agency representing their profession that is recognized within the state of TN.
3. Independent evaluators must meet the qualifications and training requirements to administer, score and interpret the evaluation instrument(s) utilized during the IEE, as specified by the test publisher.

B. Cost: Evaluators must charge fees for evaluation services which, in the judgment of the school district, are reasonable and customary for such evaluations.

C. The evaluator must not be an employee of the school district.

D. The evaluator must be permitted to directly communicate with school staff who work with the child in school, including the Special Education Director, as well as to obtain information from the school and share information with the school.

E. The evaluator must obtain and consider school information and observations of the child in the school setting in the evaluation process and the written report.

F. The evaluator must agree to provide the assessment information and results, including the results of teacher and parent checklists and surveys, in a written report to the district prior to receipt of payment for services. The evaluator will be expected to produce his/her written report within forty -- five (45) school days of the evaluation, subject to any contractual arrangement with the district or unusual circumstances which justify an extension of this timeline.

G. The evaluator must comply with all guidelines required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Tennessee State Department of Education regulations regarding the evaluation of children with disabilities. The evaluator must also comply with all applicable confidentiality requirements under state and federal law.

### Location Limitations for Evaluators

Evaluators who will be considered for approval must be located within a radius of seventy-five miles. Evaluators outside of this geographic area will be approved only on an exceptional basis, provided that the parent can demonstrate the necessity of using personnel outside of this geographic area. The district shall not be responsible to provide transportation, nor pay any travel expenses, to and from the location of the evaluator. In the case of low incidence or severe disabilities where qualified evaluators may not exist in the geographic area, this requirement may be reconsidered by the district.

### Outside Evaluations Which are Not IEEs

Evaluations and/or assessment obtained by parents/guardians which do not meet the criteria for an IEE are considered outside evaluations for which parents/guardians are not entitled to reimbursement or payment from a public-school district. Nonetheless, if a parent/guardian decides to unilaterally obtain an outside evaluation and to share the results of such evaluation with the district, the school district will consider the evaluation at an IEP meeting, as appropriate.

Questions If you have questions or need help with this process you may contact the Special Education Supervisor, LeAnn Kelly at 423-775-7812 or at [kellyleann@rheacounty.org](mailto:kellyleann@rheacounty.org).



Provider Name	Type of Assessments Conducted
Pam Guess, PH.D., c/o Riverside Psychotherapy <a href="http://www.riversidepsychotherapy.net">www.riversidepsychotherapy.net</a> 3914 St. Elmo Ave., Suite C, Chattanooga, TN 37419 (423) 802-6943	Dr. Guess is a professor/coordinator of the school psychology program at UTC. Dr. Guess provides psychoeducational evaluations in her private practice.
Stellar Therapy Services <a href="http://www.stellartherapy.com">www.stellartherapy.com</a> 6172 Airways Boulevard, Suite 122, Chattanooga, TN 37421 (423) 662-1551	Stellar provides psychological assessment services, as well as speech/language and OT/PT assessment services.
Karen Weigle, Ph.D., c/o The Chattanooga Autism Center <a href="http://www.chattanoogaautismcenter.org">www.chattanoogaautismcenter.org</a> 1400 McCallie Avenue, Suite 100, Chattanooga, TN 37404 (423) 531-6961	Dr. Weigle provides psychological evaluations with a particular focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders.
Riverside Psychotherapy 3914 St. Elmo Avenue Chattanooga, TN 37409 423-802-6943	Psycho-educational
Focus Psychiatric Services 6400 Lee Hwy #110 Chattanooga, TN 37421 (423) 899-5081	Psycho-educational
Relationship Therapy Dr. William Hillner, Ph.D 7802 Jarnigan Road Chattanooga, TN 37421 (423) 892-5462	Psycho-educational
Can DO Kids Pediatric Therapy 2850 Westside Drive NW #H Cleveland, TN 37312 (423) 476-7212	Physical Therapy Evaluation Occupational Therapy Evaluation Speech and Language Evaluation
Children's Therapy Services Children's Hospital at Erlanger 910 Blackford Street Chattanooga, TN 37403 (423) 778-6011	Speech/Language Evaluation Occupational Therapy Evaluation Physical Therapy Evaluation
The Speech and Hearing Center 2212 Encompass Drive, Suite 148 Chattanooga, TN 37421 (423) 622-6900	Speech/Language Evaluation

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