

< Evaluation basics

# 7 Steps to Getting a Private Evaluation for Your Child



By Amanda Morin



Once you **decide to get your child a private evaluation** for learning and thinking differences, then the question is: How do you make it happen? Here are seven steps to getting your child a **private evaluation**.

## **1. Gather specifics.**

**Take notes** about what you're seeing. Collect some of your child's work samples and report cards. The more specific you can be about your concerns, the easier it will be to find the right professional to evaluate your child for different types of learning and thinking differences.

## **2. Talk with your child's doctor.**

Share your observations. You may want to discuss your concerns when your child isn't with you. Ask for a referral to an **appropriate specialist** who can diagnose or rule out the issues you're wondering about.

## **3. Ask around for recommendations.**

Talk to other parents. Contact your local **Parent Training and Information Center** and other organizations to **help you find specialists in your area**.

## **4. Look for ways to reduce cost.**

When you look at **the pros and cons of private evaluations**, one of the biggest downsides is how expensive they can be. Ask local teaching hospitals or universities about a sliding fee scale for families who can't afford the full cost

of an evaluation. You may also want to ask about research studies that include free evaluations.

## 5. Call your insurance company.

If you have insurance, find out what your policy will cover. Some types of evaluations may not be covered, and it's important to know how much you'll have to pay out of pocket. Ask how much more it will cost to go to a specialist who's outside of your insurance company's network.

## 6. Talk to the evaluator.

Call the specialist and **ask questions**. Find out about practical matters, like how long the waiting list is for new patients. It's also important to find a specialist whose personality is a good fit for your child. That's because the more effort your child is willing to put into the evaluation, the more accurate the results will be.

## 7. Speak with your child's school.

**School evaluations and private evaluation results may differ**. By law, a school must consider outside evaluations, but it isn't obligated to follow the recommendations. You may want to talk with the school about what would be most useful to include in the **evaluation report** to help support the development of your child's **I.E.P.** or **504 plan**.

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## About the Author



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## Reviewed by



**Bob Cunningham, EdM** serves as executive director of learning development at Understood.

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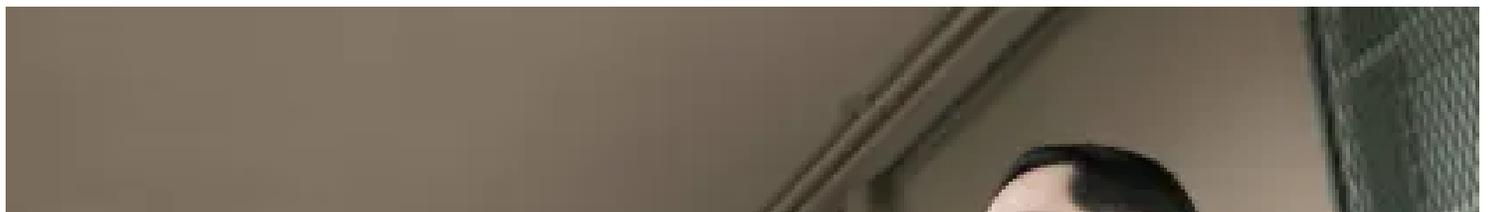


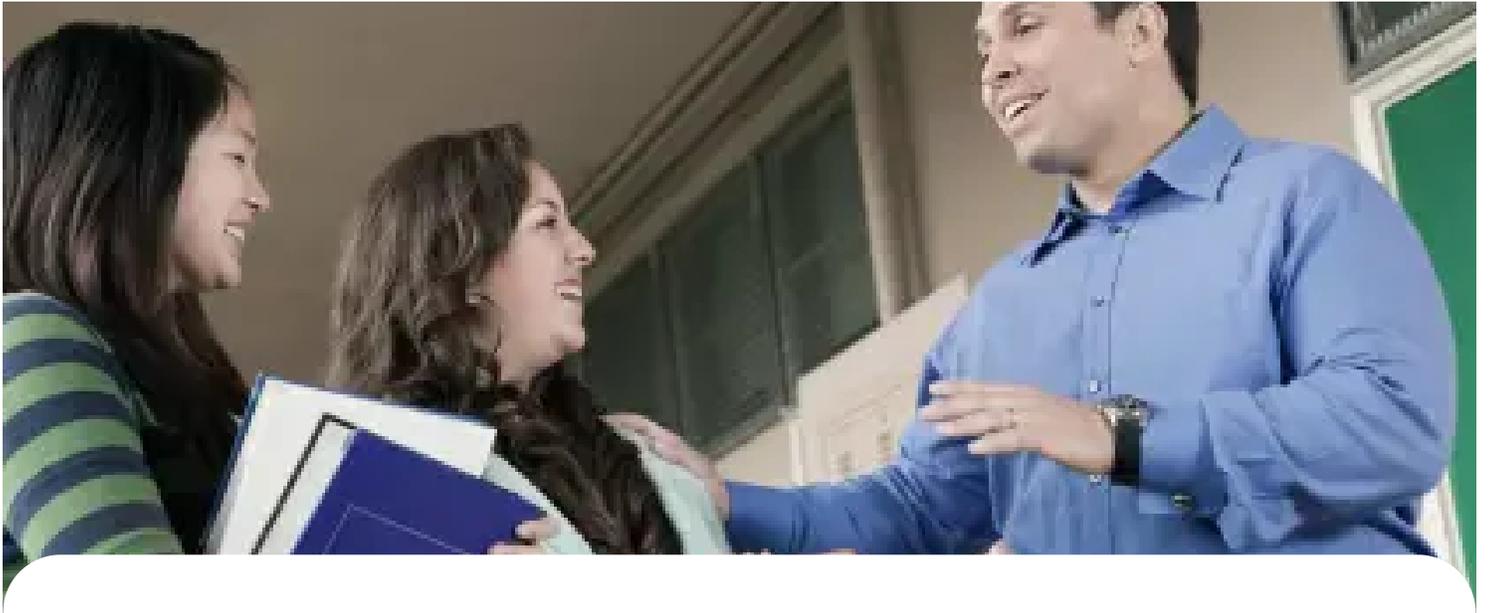
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