



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: April 16, 2025  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Directors of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities  
Route To: Directors of Special Education  
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services

## Clarification on the Intersection Between Prescriptions and Referrals for Special Education Services

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify how medical prescriptions are considered and utilized during the special education evaluation process. As outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3, a medical prescription does not constitute a formal referral for special education. While it may document a medical condition or disability, a referral requires a separate written request from a parent, guardian, or school staff member.

Referrals for special education evaluations must be based on concerns regarding a student's educational performance and the suspected impact of a disability on their ability to succeed in the general education setting. Medical prescriptions, while relevant, do not inherently address these educational concerns, such as academic performance or social interaction.

Upon receiving a referral, N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(a) mandates that the child study team, parent, and general education teacher review existing evaluation data, including parent-provided information, and determine the need for additional assessments. This team identifies necessary data to determine eligibility and ensures assessments cover all suspected disability areas. The evaluation must be comprehensive, addressing academic, developmental, and functional needs, and focus on identifying educational disabilities and associated needs. Medical prescriptions, while potentially relevant, do not provide the educational context necessary for this evaluation, which requires educational observations and assessments.

For more information regarding this clarification memo or any other questions related to special education, please contact the Office of Special Education at (609) 376-9060 or email at [oseinfo@doe.nj.gov](mailto:oseinfo@doe.nj.gov).

c: Members, State Board of Education  
NJDOE Staff  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
NJ LEE Group