

< Evaluation basics

What to Say If Your Child Is Nervous About Getting Evaluated for Special Education



By The Understood Team



At a Glance

- Some kids feel anxious or scared about getting evaluated.
- It helps to be up-front about what's happening and why.
- Talking about the process is a good opportunity to help your child start thinking about learning differences in a positive way.

Getting your child evaluated is a big step. It can lead to more resources that can help your child thrive. But an **evaluation for special education** may sound scary to some kids—especially if it's not clear what's happening or why.

Here are some situations that may make your child worried or embarrassed about the evaluation process—and how to respond.

Letting Your Child Know About the Evaluation

You don't want your child to be surprised by what's happening. But you may be worried about scaring or confusing your child with too many details about the evaluation. It helps to be up-front about the process and to talk about it in an open, positive way.

Explain why you want your child to be evaluated. Share a few details about the process and who your child will be working with. Knowing what to expect and why they're being tested can keep kids from feeling lost or anxious.

What you can say: “A woman named Mrs. Lamont will pull

you from class on Tuesday. She's an expert on how kids think and learn. She's going to ask you some questions and give you some puzzles to work on. It will be kind of like a quiz. But don't worry—it won't impact your grades at school. The way you answer the questions will help us understand more about the way you learn. Your teachers and I want you to do this so we can figure out the best way to help support you at school.”

Addressing Concerns About Being “Singled Out”

Your child may not have heard of other kids who have been evaluated and may worry about being “singled out.” Explain that many kids go through this process. It's likely your child has classmates who have been evaluated.

What you can say: “Your teacher notices how smart you are, and she thinks that you don't do as well on homework and quizzes as you could. A lot of smart kids struggle with schoolwork. Sometimes they need extra help or a different kind of teaching to help them do well in school.

“Chances are good that a bunch of kids in your class are already getting some sort of extra help. So, we're going to do some testing to find out more about how *you* learn and what might help you do the best you can at school.”

Worrying That Other Kids Will Notice

Evaluations often mean joining up with classmates later in the day or being pulled out early for testing. Your child may be worried that other kids will notice.

What you can say: “A lot of kids get taken out of class for

different reasons. I bet the other kids won't even notice. And even if they do, it's not a big deal. You can tell them that some kids need glasses to help them read. Some kids need to fidget to help them focus. You're taking some tests so we can figure out the best ways to support you in school."

Worrying About Getting the Results

Your child may worry about what it would mean to need special education. Will this mean your child isn't smart? Will this mean your child has to spend a lot of time in special classrooms?

These are common **myths about special education** you can clear up before your child even gets evaluated. Set a positive tone. No matter the results of the evaluation, help your child recognize and embrace that learning or thinking differently is OK.

What you can say: "We know you're smart, and this will help you learn in ways that make more sense to you. You may learn differently from other kids, but that in no way means you aren't as smart as your friends. And most kids who get special education services still spend most of the day in general education classrooms.

"Did you know there's an **astronaut who spent a year in space who had trouble paying attention in school**? There are also lots of actors and athletes and business leaders who learn and think differently. Let's look at some of **their stories**."

Learn more about **what to expect during the evaluation process** and **how to talk to your child about learning and**

thinking differently.

Key Takeaways

- Talk openly about why your child is being evaluated and what the process might be like.
- Clear up common myths about getting extra help in school.
- Explain that getting evaluated doesn't mean your child isn't smart.

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About the Author



The Understood Team is made up of passionate writers and editors. Many of them have kids who learn and think differently.

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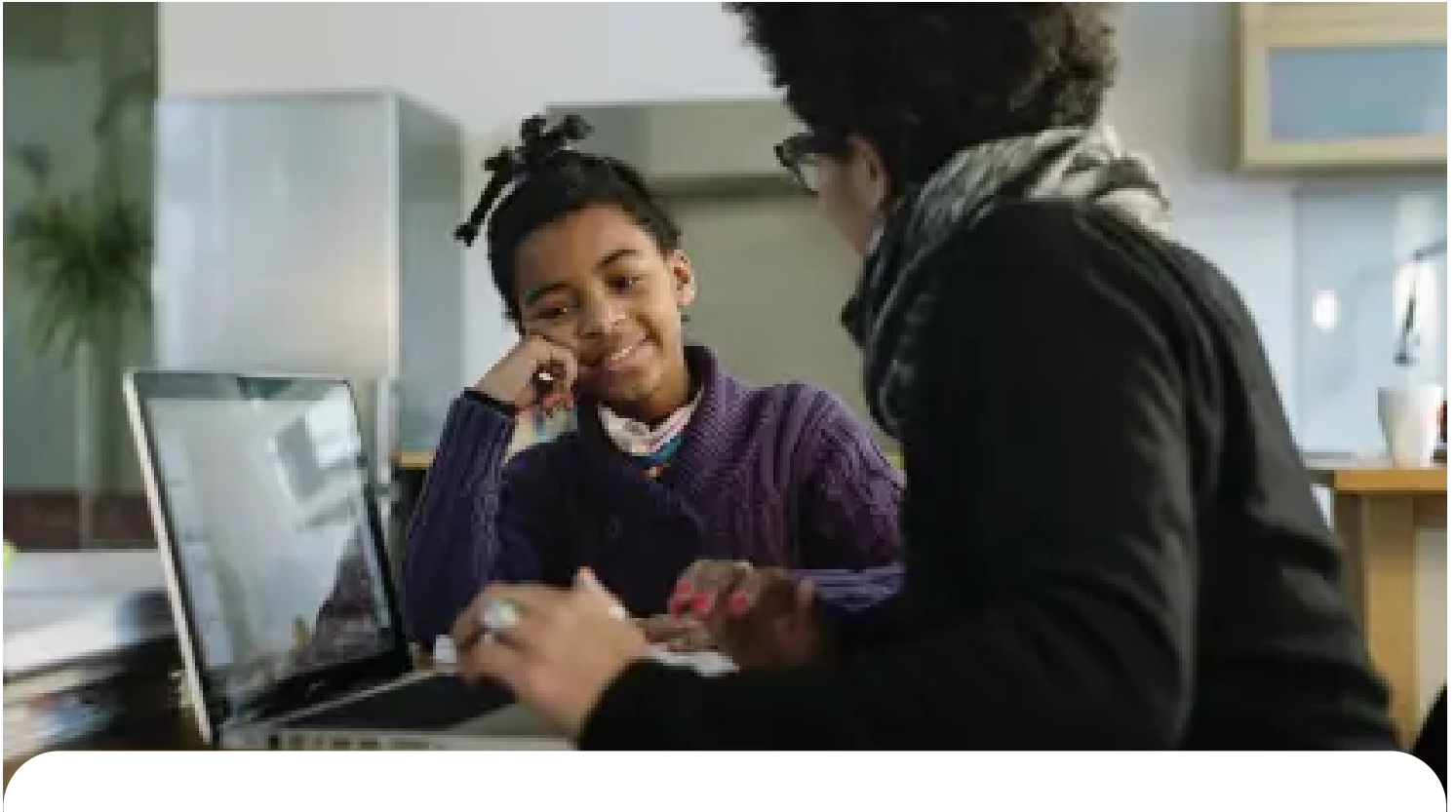


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