

**What if I am getting suspended or expelled?**

*(continued from other side)*

If you are being expelled, you or your parent/guardian should contact a lawyer right away. You have a legal right to a hearing and to have your own witnesses.

**What if my parent and I don't agree about my special education program?**

You should know that your parent/guardian is legally in charge of your educational program until you turn 18. If you are committed to the Department of Children and Families, there will be a person called an educational surrogate who will be in charge of your educational program. Only your parent/guardian or educational surrogate has the legal right to file a Complaint or ask for a hearing.

You can ask to go to the PPT and tell the team what you want, even if it is different from what your parent/guardian wants. But if the PPT disagrees with you, you do not have the legal right to file a Complaint or ask for a hearing until you turn 18. Only your parent/guardian or educational surrogate can do that.



**There are a lot of students who feel frustrated in school.**

**If you have tried and tried but you're still not learning, you might need special education services.**

**Special education means an education plan written just for you so that you can learn.**

**Where can I get help?**

CCA's Teen Legal Clinic: (860)570-5327  
Statewide Legal Services: (800)453-3320  
Expulsion Project: (800)453-3320  
Director of Special Education at your school or the Central Office of your school district

To send a Complaint letter or ask for a hearing:  
State Department of Education  
Bureau of Special Education  
PO Box 2219, Hartford, CT 06145-2219  
(860)713-6921

**If you have questions about your legal rights, call CCA's Teen Legal Advocacy Clinic at (860)570-5327 or (203)223-8975.**



**Center for Children's Advocacy**  
65 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, CT 06105  
[www.kidscounsel.org](http://www.kidscounsel.org)

**I am so frustrated in school.**

**I can't learn.**

**What can I do?**

## Special Education terms that you should know:

**Accommodations** - changes to the way you are taught, to make sure you can learn (some examples are using a tape recorder in class, or sitting in the front of the classroom).

**Complaint** - if your parent/guardian disagrees with the school's plan for your education, s/he can send a letter to the Complaint Review Process at the Department of Education.

**Due Process** - if your parent/guardian disagrees with the school's plan, s/he can ask for a hearing with the Department of Education.

**Evaluation** - testing used to figure out your education plan.

**IEP** (Individualized Education Program) - the written plan for your education.

**Manifestation Determination** - a meeting that must be held by the school when a special education student is suspended for more than 10 days in a school year, to determine if your disability was the reason you got into trouble.

**PPT** (Planning and Placement Team) - a team of people who help to figure out the education plan for you. Sometimes this is also called an IEP team.

**PPT Meeting** - a meeting to talk about your education.

## What does it mean if I'm a special education student?

It means that you learn in a unique way and that you need an education program that is created just for you.

## Does it mean that I'm not smart?

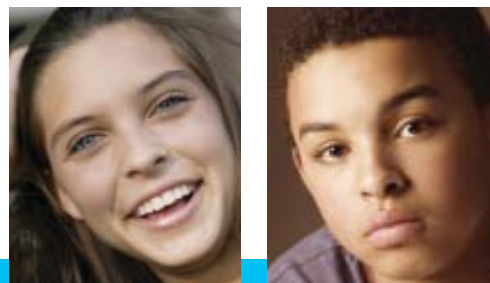
No. Everyone learns differently. All it means is that you need a different education plan in order to learn.

## Does it mean that I have to go to a different school or be in different classes?

Not necessarily. Usually, the people at your school will try to make some adjustments to help you learn better without changing schools or classes. Sometimes, this will solve the problem. Other times, different classes or a different school might be the best way for you to learn.

## How do I know if I should receive special education?

If you are having trouble learning, and you and your school have tried different ways to help you learn that haven't worked, your parent/guardian should write a letter to the school to ask the school to do tests (evaluations) to see if you need special education services.



## Who decides what my program will be?

The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) develops your education program. (Sometimes, the PPT is called the IEP team.) The PPT will have meetings to figure out the right educational program for you. You and your parent/guardian are a part of the PPT and have a right to help make this decision, along with people from your school.

## What will my program be like?

Your program could include more time to take tests, transportation to school, and job-training. Special education can be as little as getting you a seat at the front of the class to help you concentrate, or it could be a transfer to a different school with smaller classes. It all depends on what you need to be able to learn.

## What is my IEP?

It is your Individualized Education Plan. When the PPT figures out your special education program, it will be written in the IEP. On page 8 of your IEP, there is a list of all the services you should be getting. Tell your parent/guardian if you are not getting everything that is listed.

## Can special education help me go to college or get a job?

When you are 14 or older, your special education program has to help get you ready for your future. This can include teaching you skills to get you ready for college or giving you work experience.

## Do I have to pay for my special education program?

No. If you qualify for special education, the school has to pay for all the services in your special education program.

## What if I'm in special education but I still don't think I'm learning?

1. Talk to your parent/guardian, teachers, tutors, or other school staff.
2. Ask for another PPT meeting.
3. Talk about your problems at the PPT meeting, and make sure that the IEP has your concerns in writing.

If the PPT meeting doesn't help you, your parent/guardian can file a Complaint with the Connecticut Department of Education, or ask for a hearing. Your parent/guardian can also ask for a hearing if you disagree with any decision that the PPT makes.

## What if I'm in special education and I am getting suspended or expelled from school?

If the school suspends you for more than 10 days in a school year or attempts to expel you, they must hold a PPT meeting within 10 days of when you were disciplined. At this meeting, the team will figure out if the behavior you are being suspended for was caused by your disability, and if your special education plan was being provided. This is called a manifestation determination meeting.