FREE GUIDE

Massachusetts special education deadlines

Sources last checked between Nov 16, 2026 and Nov 20, 2026
State rules as of November 20, 2026

RULE	FIRST LINE OF THE RULE	SOURCE
EVALUATIONS		
Responding to an evaluation request	Within five school days after receiving an evaluation referral, the school must send you written notice.	603 Mass. Code Regs. 28.04(1)(a)
Completing an initial evaluation	In Massachusetts, the initial evaluation generally must be finished within 30 school working days after the school receives your consent.	603 CMR 28.04(2); 28.05(1); 28.02(5)
FIRST IEP MEETING		
The initial IEP after eligibility	In Massachusetts, the Team generally has 45 school working days after the district receives your written consent.	603 CMR 28.05(1), (7)(a); 34 C.F.R. § 300.323(c)(1)
SCHOOL RECORDS		
Timing of access to education records	In Massachusetts, you, or an eligible student, can see your child's entire student record as soon as practicable, and within 10 days after you first ask.	603 CMR 23.07(2), (5); M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H; 34 CFR 300.613(a), (c)
Copies of records, fees and access barriers	Massachusetts permits a reasonable copying fee no greater than the cost of reproduction.	603 CMR 23.07(2)(a)
IEP REVIEWS AND REEVALUATIONS		
Regular IDEA reevaluation	Your child must be reevaluated at least once every three years, unless you and the school agree it isn't needed.	34 CFR 300.303(a), (b)
Reviewing the IEP at least annually	Your child's IEP team must review the IEP periodically, and at least once a year, to see whether the annual goals are being met.	34 CFR 300.324(b)(1)(i)
TRANSITION PLANNING		
When transition goals and services begin	In Massachusetts, starting at age 14, your child has a right to transition services and goals for life after high school (measurable postsecondary goals).	M.G.L. c. 71B, § 2; Massachusetts Notice of Procedural Safeguards (PNPS 2009, updated May 30, 2025), § 8
RIGHTS AT ADULTHOOD		
Advance notice about the transfer of IDEA rights	The age of majority is when your child becomes a legal adult under state law.	34 CFR 300.320(c); 300.520(a)–(b)
The state's age of majority and IDEA rights	In Massachusetts, your child has the right to make all special education decisions at 18.	603 CMR 28.07(5)(a)–(c); 34 CFR 300.320(c), 300.520(a)(3); DESE Administrative Advisory SPED 2011-1 (guidance)
PRESCHOOL AND EARLY INTERVENTION		
Preschool special education by age three	For a child moving from early intervention (Part C) to preschool special education, an IEP, or an IFSP where that is allowed, must be developed and in place by the third birthday.	34 CFR 300.124(b); 300.101(b); 300.102(a)(1), (4)
Moving from early intervention to preschool	When a child is referred at age two and a half, the school district must evaluate the child so that special education can begin promptly at age three if the child qualifies.	603 Mass. Code Regs. § 28.04(1)(d)
OTHER RULES		
Records for a parent without physical custody	In Massachusetts, a parent who doesn't have physical custody under a court order can still get the student's records.	603 CMR 23.02, 23.07(5)(a)-(f); M.G.L. c.71, §34H
Assessment summaries before Team discussion	In Massachusetts, you can ask to see the written assessment summaries before the Team meeting.	603 CMR28.02(5),28.04(2)(c),28.05(1)
The school's response to an IEE request	If you do not meet the state's income-based funding criteria, decline to share financial information, or request an independent evaluation in an area the school did not assess, the school must agree to pay or request a hearing within five school days to defend its evaluation.	Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 71B, § 3; 603 Mass. Code Regs. 28.04(5)(c)–(d)
Responding to a proposed IEP	In Massachusetts, your response to a proposed IEP and placement is due within 30 calendar days after you receive them.	603 CMR 28.05(7); 28.02(5); 28.07(1)(a)
Give written notice before moving to a private school	If you plan to move your child to a private school and ask the district to pay, give the district written notice at least 10 business days before your child leaves the public school.	34 CFR 300.148(d)–(e); 300.11(b)
IEP services after a move within the state	After a move between Massachusetts districts, the new district must provide the services in your child's last accepted IEP in a comparable setting without delay until a new plan is developed and accepted.	603 Mass. Code Regs. § 28.03(1)(c)