

Extended School Year (ESY) Services

If there is evidence that your child experiences a substantial regression in skills during school vacations, he or she may be entitled to **Extended School Year (ESY)** services. These services would be provided over long breaks from school (such as summer vacation) to prevent substantial regression, but not to acquire new skills. It is important for the family to remain involved in determining appropriate goals, communicating with the educational team about your child's progress and working to provide consistency between home and school life.

How Do I Get Services Started for My Child?

If your child is under the age of three, call your local Early Intervention agency. In most states, Early Intervention is provided by the Department of Health. Contact information is included in the Autism Speaks Resource Guide. If your child is three or older, contact your local school district, more specifically the Office of Special Education within the school district. In some cases, you may need to put the request in writing that you would like your child evaluated for special education services. Refer to "Assembling Your Team" in this kit for more information. You'll find more in the Action Plan section of this kit.



Before services can be provided, it may be necessary to complete further assessments and evaluations. These may include:

An unstructured diagnostic play session

A developmental evaluation

A speech-language assessment

A parent interview

An evaluation of current behavior

An evaluation of adaptive or real life skills

You may find yourself spending some time in waiting rooms with your child when you are completing additional evaluations. You have probably already figured out how helpful it is to bring some snacks for your child, his or her favorite toy or some other form of entertainment to help pass the time. Waiting for the completion of these additional evaluations, which may be required by the school district or early intervention services, may be frustrating. There are sometimes waiting lists, so it is important to start the process as soon as possible. The additional evaluations will provide much more in-depth information about your child's symptoms, strengths and needs and will be helpful for accessing and planning therapy services in the long run.

"I was overwhelmed in the beginning by all the evaluations and paperwork. But watching the changes in Samantha as she learns and grows, we know our efforts are paying off."