# M4: Navigating Parental/Guardian Refusal of Special Education Services

## Course

Special Education

## Location

Module 4

## Alignments

### Course Outcomes

 CLO IV: Explain intervention and assessment procedures for prospective special education students.

### Module Outcomes

MLO 4.1: Recognize the role that classroom teachers play in the special education process.

MLO 4.4: Identify common accommodations, modifications, and services within IEPs.

### Specific InTASC Standards

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| **InTASC** | **Type** | **Specific Standard** |
| 7m | Knowledge | The teacher knows when and how to access resources and collaborate with others to support student learning (e.g., special educators, related service providers, language learner specialists, librarians, media specialists, community organizations). |
| 7p | Disposition | The teacher takes professional responsibility to use short- and long-term planning as a means of assuring student learning. |

## Activity Instructions

### Purpose

Teachers must comply with federal and state laws and district policies to ensure that students with documented disabilities are able to access the academic programming needed for them to be successful. But what happens if a parent/guardian refuses? Sometimes, a parent/guardian decides to refuse services for their child, and when this happens, teachers must be supportive of both the parent/guardian and the student. Additionally, the teacher still must be aware of the student’s needs so that the student can effectively learn, even without an Individualized Educational Program.

This activity invites you to consider what to do when a parent/guardian refuses special education services for their child. Through a discussion with a classmate, you will consider how you would respond to three different imagined scenarios found on the last page of this document.

### Task

#### Instructor Preparation for Activity

* Prepare a 10-minute lecture on the importance of parental/guardian involvement throughout the special education services process. Essentially, the teacher will explain why parents/guardians need to be involved in the special education process, from assessing the student to see if they are eligible for services to approving the Individualized Educational Program after the student has been found eligible to receive services. In this lecture, you also might include a video clip of a parent/guardian explaining why they refused special education services to provide a narrative.
  + [Here is an article from NASET.](https://blog.reallygoodstuff.com/how-to-prepare-and-begin-parent-conferences-for-parents-of-children-with-disabilities-who-resist-services-for-their-children-by-naset/)

#### Student Directions

For this activity, you will work with a partner.

1. Review the scenarios listed on the following page and select three of the scenarios.
2. After thoroughly reading through the three scenarios that you and your partner selected, identify the following:
   1. How would you partner with this parent/guardian to show that you support their decision and their child?
   2. How might you reconsider your teaching practices with this student?
   3. Is there anything else that you would like to share?
3. Share your responses with your classmates.

### Example

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Selected Scenario** | **How Would You Partner with the Parent/Guardian? Suggest additional strategies.** | **What Teaching Strategies Might You Use? (Refer to Module 2: The IDEA and the 13 Disability Types** | **Anything Else?** |
| Scenario 1: Fear of upsetting the applecart | Validate their concern and emphasize that they know their child the best. Ask what strategies they use at home and try to incorporate those strategies into my teaching practices with the student. | I would try to keep the structure of class as predictable as possible. I would also try to promote structured social opportunities so this student could practice social interaction. | I think it would also be important to keep the parents/guardians informed about the student’s progress. |

## Scenarios

The following scenarios were generated from Microsoft Copilot (2024).

### Scenario 1: Fear of Upsetting the Applecart

Type of Disability: Autism

Grade Level: 2nd Grade

Strengths: Exceptional memory, attention to detail, and ability in visual learning.

Needs: Struggles with social interactions, communication, and adapting to changes.

Reason for Refusal: The parents/guardians fear that introducing special education services might disrupt their child’s routine, causing distress and potentially worsening their condition. They prefer to maintain the current learning environment and use strategies they’ve found effective at home.

### Scenario 2: Distrust of School or Academic Community

Type of Disability: Dyscalculia

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Strengths: Strong verbal skills, creativity, and interpersonal skills.

Needs: Difficulty understanding mathematical concepts and performing arithmetic operations.

Reason for Refusal: The parents/guardians had a previous negative experience with the school’s handling of their child’s needs. They distrust the school’s ability to provide appropriate special education services and prefer to seek external tutoring.

### Scenario 3: Fear of Child’s Condition Worsening

Type of Disability: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Grade Level: 7th Grade

Strengths: High energy, creativity, and ability to think outside the box.

Needs: Difficulty focusing, impulsivity, and disruptive behavior.

Reason for Refusal: The parents/guardians worry that the suggestion of special education services indicates their child’s condition is worsening. They fear more serious interventions might be needed and prefer to continue with the current strategies and medications.

### Scenario 4: Panic or Vulnerability Leading to Indecision

Type of Disability: Specific Learning Disorder with Impairment in Written Expression

Grade Level: 4th Grade

Strengths: Good oral communication skills, creativity, and social skills.

Needs: Difficulty with spelling, grammar, punctuation, and organizing ideas for written Activitys.

Reason for Refusal: The parents/guardians feel overwhelmed by the suggestion of special education services. They are unsure about the best course of action and decide to maintain the status quo until they can make a more informed decision.

### Scenario 5: Fear of Criticism from Spouse

Type of Disability: Speech Sound Disorder

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Strengths: Good non-verbal communication skills, creativity, and physical coordination.

Needs: Difficulty pronouncing certain sounds and words clearly.

Reason for Refusal: One parent/guardian fears criticism from their spouse, who may see the need for additional services as a sign that they are not doing enough at home. They decide to refuse services to avoid potential conflict.

### Scenario 6: Difference of Opinion on What’s Best for the Child

Type of Disability: Developmental Coordination Disorder

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

Strengths: Strong verbal skills, good memory, and problem-solving abilities.

Needs: Difficulty with motor skills, such as writing, buttoning clothes, or tying shoelaces.

Reason for Refusal: The parents/guardians have differing opinions on how to address their child’s needs. One parent/guardian believes in the benefits of special education services, while the other thinks that their child can overcome their challenges through regular physical activities and practice. They decide to refuse services until they reach a consensus.

## Reference

Microsoft. (2024). *Copilot.* [www.bing.com/chat.](http://www.bing.com/chat)