

Q&A: Abbreviated School Days

In the 2024 legislative session, [Colorado House Bill 24-1063: Addressing Abbreviated School Days for Students with Disabilities](#), passed and became law in Colorado. This fact sheet discusses what this bill means for Coloradans and what to do if you or your child encounter this problem.

What is an abbreviated school day?

Colorado law now defines an abbreviated school day as any school day during which a child with disabilities receives instruction or educational services for fewer hours than the majority of other students who are in the same grade and school district as the child with disabilities. This is true whether the abbreviated school day is planned or unplanned. These days may be more commonly known as shortened school days or informal removals. The student's school day is usually shortened for a variety of reasons that are typically related to their disability. Under this law, this definition only applies to elementary and secondary schools, not preschool or higher education settings.

What are some examples of an abbreviated school day or an informal removal?

- ❖ The school calls a parent to pick their student up early every day, or most days.
- ❖ The school only allows a student to go to school for an hour every day due to behavior issues.
- ❖ The school will not allow a student to return to school due to behavior issues, but does not label it a "suspension."
- ❖ The school sends a student home for violating a school policy, but does not label it a "suspension."

These are red flags that a student might need a [manifestation determination review \(MDR\)](#) if these "informal removals" or "informal suspensions" are for related behaviors and go beyond 10 days.

What does the new state law do to address this problem?

This law provides additional protections for families to ensure their rights are upheld if their child is not allowed to attend a full day of school.

- Schools must ensure parents receive proper notice, including their right to consent to, revoke consent, or oppose a shortened school day for their child.
- Schools must hold regular meetings with the students IEP or 504 team to discuss the value or need for continuing a shortened day. They must also have a plan in place for the child to return to a full day of school.
- Additionally, the state law includes accountability measures that require the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to provide a clear legal framework to ensure that every child has access to a full day of school, collect data about the frequency of which students are not attending a full day of school, and provide ongoing technical assistance to administrative units on this issue.
- There are also additional funds to assist CDE in implementing the new law.

What should I do if I am encountering this issue?

If you need help or have questions about your rights, you can contact [Disability Law Colorado](#). You may also pursue dispute resolution through one of the available complaint processes explained in Disability Law Colorado's [Dispute Resolution Fact Sheet](#) and [Dispute Resolution Video](#). You may also be able to request [Compensatory Services](#) for time that your student missed.

Where can I get more information?

- [House Bill 24-1063](#)
- [Colorado Department of Education](#)
- [Disability Law Colorado's Fact Sheets](#)
- [Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions](#)
- [Positive, Proactive Approaches to Supporting Children with Disabilities: A Guide for Stakeholders](#)