

Candler County

Program for Exceptional Children

Child Find

Special education and related services are provided in guarantee of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment, for any student ages 3-21 identified as having a disability under the guidelines and provisions of IDEA and the Georgia State Rules governing Special Education and Related Services. The process for identification of children in need of services is referred to as Child Find. Most community agencies, including medical facilities, schools, churches, private day care/preschool providers, and others typically have a supply of Child Find brochures. These brochures help the parent to identify signs of possible disabilities, and provide referral information to the local special education office or Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) for additional assistance. Child Find is free service available to any child age 3-21. If you would like to receive a Child Find brochure, please call the special education office, or request one from any Candler County school. If you know of a child that may have a disability, please contact, or encourage the child's parents to contact the special education department.

The federal law governing special education was reauthorized in 2004, with subsequent state rules being written and put into code on July 1, 2007. These new rules have added a layer to the special education eligibility process, which is called Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is an exciting and wonderful opportunity for all children, as it requires general education to provide research-based and evidence-supported specific remedial interventions to students in areas identified as deficit when compared to the majority of same age/grade peers. As these interventions are being provided, formative evaluations are conducted routinely to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. If the child responds positively to the intervention, it can be assumed that the difficulties were not the result of a disability, but perhaps a curriculum or specific skill deficit impacting mastery of successive skills. This can be a time intensive process. Multiple interventions may be attempted in order to help the child meet with success.

When all reasonable interventions at the highest level have been exhausted, Student Support Team (SST) coordinators at the local level become increasingly involved and begin the SST tracking process. The SST process also serves as a conduit to special education assessment and eligibility consideration when the needs of the students warrant such referrals. Georgia rules state that without evidence of prior intervention, a special education eligibility team may not consider a child as disabled. Therefore, it is very important that the school explore and implement with fidelity, successive interventions before referring a child for special education evaluation.

Once referred for assessment, the multidisciplinary evaluation team, consisting of a school psychologist and/or speech pathologist, general education teacher, parent(s), and other individuals who know the child, will engage in the evaluation process. A list of assessment descriptors is available upon request from the special education office, or by clicking on the link below. The evaluation must be completed and a meeting held to determine whether or not the child meets the criteria for one or more disability areas. If eligible for services, the committee will develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for implementation within 30 calendar days of the meeting. For more information on the identification, placements, and services available through special education, visit the DOE website – Exceptional Students at [Georgia Department of Education - Special Education](#) .