

**Candler County Board of Education
Program for Exceptional Children**

Preschool Referrals from Pre-kindergarten teachers in Candler County

1. A pre-kindergarten teacher may refer a student for an evaluation to determine special education placement if the child is four by September 1. (If the child is five on September 1, the usual referral procedures established for the student's local school should be followed.) The following procedures should be followed to ensure that the referral is handled in a professional and quick manner.
2. **Be sure that the student's parents/guardian is aware of the nature of the referral.**
3. Complete the referral form and send it directly to Psychologist at BOE. The psychologist will be responsible for contacting the social worker or teacher and assist in gathering additional background information. A time will be set up for the evaluation. The evaluation can take place at the preschool special education class housed at the local school.
4. **Before the referral is made** there are several resources the teachers may use. The psychologist can be called to make an observation. The school counselor, social worker, the behavior specialist or special education teacher may be asked to observe or for an opinion to the appropriateness of the referral.
5. The pre-school handicapped program welcomes any referral of four year old pre-Kindergarten students before Christmas. However, if a child has not been referred before Christmas (half of the school year has taken place) then the usual referral procedures of the school should be followed. In this case the child's disability is not severe enough to be removed from the pre-kindergarten classroom. Information on this procedure can be found by asking the principal or referral contact person of the school. This is because the child, if eligible, will probably be served at his local school when he goes to kindergarten.
6. For your information, unless the child's disability is severe, the child will probably be determined as Significantly Developmentally Delayed (if the child is four years old at the time of evaluation). The child will be re-evaluated at school sometimes in kindergarten. Due to changes in special education policies at the state department it is now recommended to keep a child SDD as long as possible before placing a special education label.

Thank you

Comment:

Each year I get many phone calls about children who have summer birthdays. Teachers often want to refer these children to special education or want the children withdrawn from pre-school (wait till the child is five). Please keep in mind that often a child who has a summer birthday may not have the social skills and maturity of an older child. This does not indicate the child needs special education or needs to be withdrawn from school. If the child lacks social skills or communication skills the best place for the child is in school in order to optimize his young age and take advantage of his **rapid brain growth at that age**. As a child gets older the window of rapid learning and language obtainment closes. A five year old will not learn as rapidly as a four year old according to brain research and often delaying a year of school closes an important window. Remember that Pre-Kindergarten was originally designed for children that needed a boost in order to be successful in school. Children with summer birthdays or children who lack social and emotional skills need Pre-Kindergarten more than the children with enriched backgrounds that come to school reading. In an ideal world it would be very advantageous to provide learning opportunities for children as young as possible.

WHEN WE BEGAN THE CAMPAIGN FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN THE SLOGAN WAS “**FIVE IS TOO LATE.**” **REMEMBER THIS SLOGAN...**