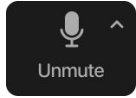


Developmental Screening, Referral, and Supports for Young Children with Disabilities

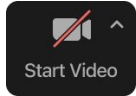
Young Children with Disabilities Community of Practice



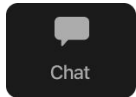
Zoom Meeting Preparation



- Please make sure your phone or computer is muted to minimize background noise.
 - To do this, hover over the bottom left-hand side of your screen and click “Mute.”



- Please make sure you have turned off your camera to save bandwidth and prevent any connectivity issues.
 - To do this, hover over the bottom left-hand side of your screen and click “Stop Video.”



- Please submit questions during the presentation in the “Chat” function located on the bottom of your screen.

If you require an interpreter or have other accessibility needs for future LDOE meetings, please contact LDOEcommunications@la.gov.



Purpose

The monthly Young Children with Disabilities Community of Practice is designed to allow early childhood special education administrators and leaders to:

- collaborate with others on current trends and practices in servicing and supporting young children with special needs
- problem solve challenges
- share and celebrate successes



Agenda

- I. Early Childhood Development
- II. Developmental Screening
- III. Early Childhood Special Education Eligibility Process
- IV. Supporting Young Children with Disabilities in the Classroom
- V. Collaborating for Service Delivery
- VI. Resources



Learning Objectives

Child Development Foundations

Understanding the critical "first five" years and why development matters.

Developmental Screenings

Defining screenings and the urgency of early identification.

Screening Tools

Reviewing common screening tools including ASQ-3 and ASQ Online.

The Screening Process

Mastering the referral and follow-up process for children.

Family Support

Strategies for effectively supporting children and their families.

LDOE Eligibility & Special Ed

Navigating the LDOE Eligibility Process and special education.

Program Best Practices

Implementing evidence-based practices for screening programs.





Early Childhood Development

Early Child Development

Early childhood experiences during the first five years have a significant impact on child development outcomes later in life.

Understanding what happens during these stages of development allows programs, school systems, and families to meet a child's needs effectively.

- When developmental and learning needs are identified early and accurately and children receive timely, appropriate and effective support, interventions, and specialized services aligned to their needs, learning is accelerated, skill gaps are closed, and children achieve at higher levels.



Stages of Development

Early child development includes the way that a child grows, changes, and develops skills.

During each stage of development, children reach different developmental milestones that provide caregivers with an idea of how a child should be progressing in each stage. The stages of development include:

- Newborn (0-3 months)
- Infant (3-12 months)
- Toddler (1-3 years)
- Preschooler (3-4 years)
- School-Age (4-5 years)



Meeting Milestones



- Developmental milestones have been determined by extensive research.
- These milestones help parents, teachers, and caregivers who work with children better understand what to expect.
- Knowing the expectations will help to identify any developmental delays or problems that may exist so that the child can receive the support they need to progress.

Missed Milestones

When a child begins to miss developmental milestones, it is important for them to receive early intervention right away.

Early child development lays the foundation for the rest of a child's life and has a direct impact on kindergarten readiness.



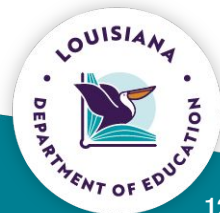


The Importance of Early Identification Through Developmental Screening

Why Developmental Screening Matters

Appropriately identifying young children with disabilities is critical for ensuring that learners receive the supports needed to meet early milestones and succeed in school.

- *According to the CDC, developmental delays, learning disorders, and behavioral problems are estimated to affect 1 in every 6 children.*
- *Fewer than 30% of young children with disabilities are identified as needing help before school begins.*



What is Developmental Screening?

Developmental screening is a brief, standardized process used to determine whether a young child is meeting expected developmental milestones or may benefit from further evaluation.

- Screening is NOT a diagnosis, but an early identification tool
- Evidence supports the use of validated screening tools, such as the ASQ-3 to identify potential developmental concerns early, when intervention is most effective.
- Should be conducted at regular intervals



Why we screen?

Developmental screening tools are used to:

- identify children who may be at risk for developmental delays;
- monitor whether children are meeting age-appropriate developmental milestones;
- help caregivers and educators detect potential concerns early and accurately before delays significantly impact learning and development;
- and provide information that guides early intervention, support services, and instructional planning to better meet a child's needs.



Recommended Screening Practices

Recommended Screening Practices by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Should occur at 9, 18, and 24/30 months of age
- Should include ongoing developmental monitoring
- Families should be involved in the screening process
- Use validated screening tools

Common developmental screening Tools include: Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ-3®), ASQ® online, PEDS, Brigance, and DIAL.

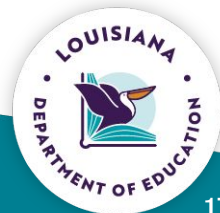




Developmental Screening Tools: ASQ-3®

Ages and Stages Questionnaires-3® (ASQ-3®)

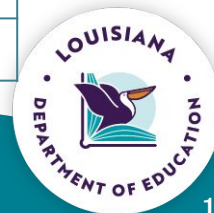
- Programs across the state are utilizing the ASQ-3® for developmental screening, because it is the number one evidence-based screening tool recommended by pediatricians.
- The ASQ-3® can be incorporated into school registration, only takes 10-15 minutes to complete, helps catch more delays, and is parent-completed.
- The ASQ-3® is a family-friendly, parent engaged screener that focuses on their child's development. It has fun learning activities embedded and improves partnerships with parents.
- There is a digital version of the ASQ-3® available as well that allows caregivers and professionals to complete, score, and track developmental screenings more efficiently and accurately.



ASQ® Online vs Paper ASQ-3®

Programs have the option of administering the ASQ-3® using either the paper format or ASQ® Online. The following comparison highlights key features of each option.

ASQ-3® Paper	ASQ® Online
Manual scoring	Automated scoring
Manual age calculations	System-calculated adjusted ages
Paper questionnaires	Families complete online via computer or smartphone
Paper filing and storage	Secure electronic records
Manual report creation	Instant, easy-to-generate reports
Limited language accessibility	Built-in questionnaire translations
Manual tracking of due dates	Automated tasks and reminders
Individual site management	Enterprise accounts link multiple program locations



Using Screening Results

Screening results should be considered alongside:

- teacher observations
- family input
- ongoing assessment to guide referrals, individualized supports, and instructional planning.

Results guide — not determine — referrals and instructional decisions.

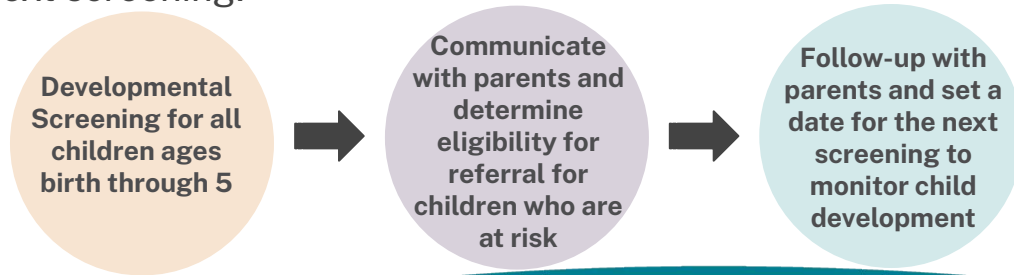


Screening, Referral, and Follow up

Screening: Developmental screening uses evidence-based screening tools. The most commonly recommended developmental screening tool is the Ages & Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ-3®). The ASQ-3® is easy to use, uses parent reporting, and has a variety of questions based on the age of the child.

Referral: Screening results in the at-risk zone requires communicating with parents and possibly referring a child for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services.

Follow-up: Screening should always end with follow-up—at the end of screening, communication with parents about the results is important. If the child is at-risk, set a date with the parents to review the results and determine next steps. If the child is in the “monitoring” zone, set the date follow-up with the next screening.



Ages and Stages Questionnaires-3® (ASQ-3®)

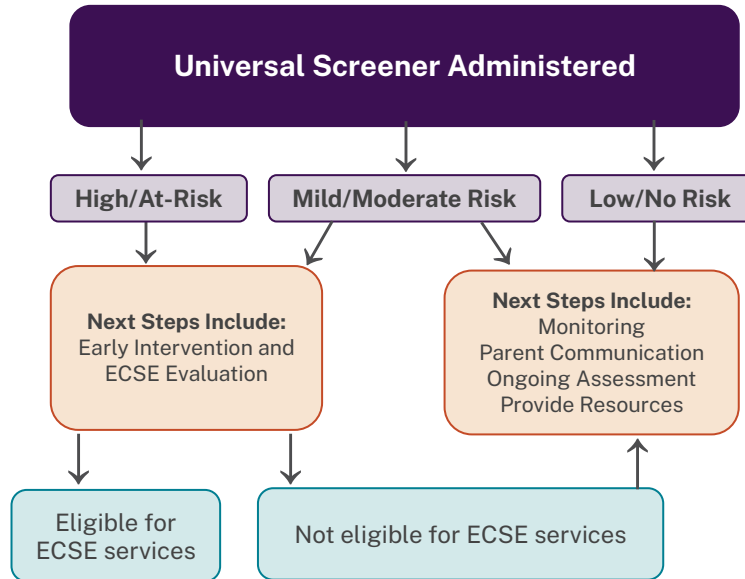
The ASQ-3® provides recommendations based on the outcomes for the following:

- **If a child's score falls in the high/at-risk range,** the child should receive interventions while going through the ECSE evaluation process.
 - However, according to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), interventions cannot delay the evaluation for children in preschool settings.
- **If a child's score falls in the mild/moderate risk range,** more assessment and monitoring is needed to determine whether a child needs to go through the eligibility process.
 - These children should be monitored through interventions and re-assessed often to determine next steps.
- **If a child's score falls in the low/no risk range,** the next steps should include monitoring, ongoing assessment, communication with parents, and providing resources to families to help their child be successful.



ASQ-3® and the ECSE Referral Process

The ASQ-3® provides recommendations based on the outcomes to guide the Early Childhood Special Education referral process:



The Importance of Early Identification

Children who receive early intervention for developmental delays are more likely to graduate from high school, hold jobs, and live independently. To identify students **EARLY**:

- Choose and administer a screening assessment to every child upon entry into the system: in child care, prekindergarten, or kindergarten.
- Schedule regular [diagnostic screenings](#) for every child: cognitive, speech/language, well-being, fine/gross motor and vision/hearing.



Coordinating Accurate Identification

Early identification leads to more accurate identification by:

- intervening earlier with specialized services that are aligned to the needs and skill gaps
- increasing the opportunities to meet developmental and academic goals

To identify students **ACCURATELY**:

- Educate staff on the administration of screening assessments and how to use them effectively.
- Enact a comprehensive screening and intervention plan.
- Provide professional development for all teachers regarding the screening and intervention process.

Reminder: Interventions are not required for preschool-aged children and cannot delay the referral process to determine eligibility for services.





Early Childhood Special Education Eligibility Process

LDOE Early Childhood Special Education Eligibility Process

All children in Louisiana should receive periodic, age-appropriate, and comprehensive screenings, including at the following intervals:

- as part of well-child visits to their pediatrician
- in response to parental concerns
- in response to a triggering event such as hospitalization or trauma
- sudden onset of behavior that concerns the family, caregiver, or teacher

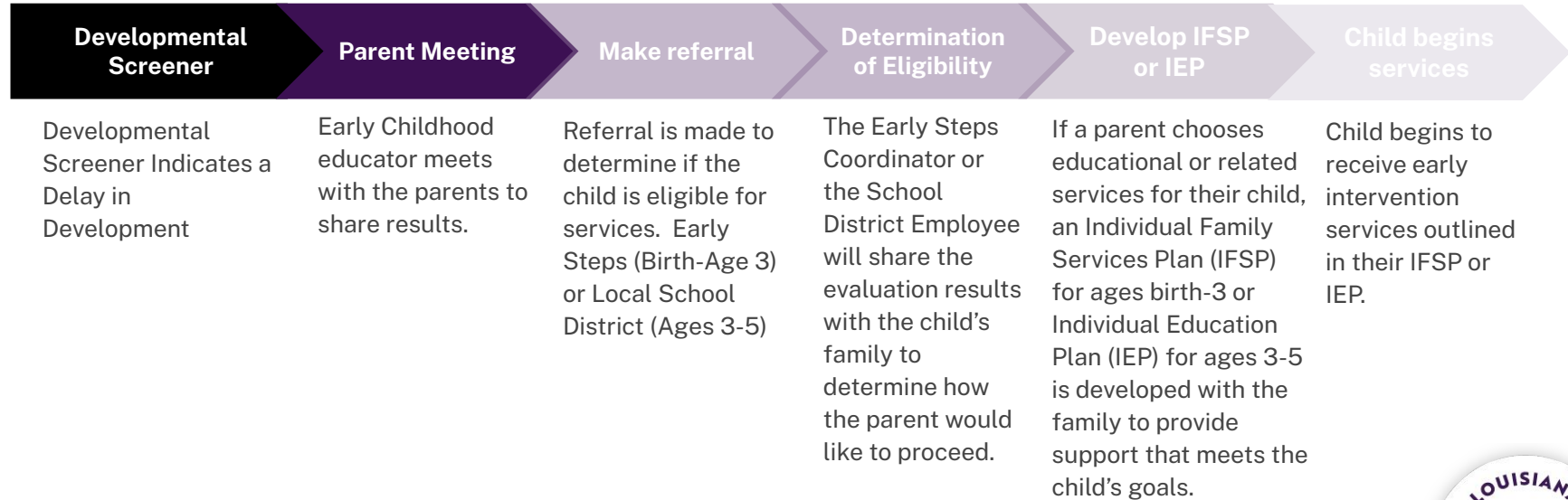
It is important to understand the process for early childhood special education services, who supports the services, and what services are offered depending on the needs of the individual child.

- Depending on the age of the child, the eligibility process may change.



LDOE EC Special Education Eligibility Process

The chart below breaks down the eligibility process for children ages birth to three and children ages three to five that includes referral, eligibility determination, individualized planning, and service provision.



EarlySteps (Birth-2)

EarlySteps provides services to families with infants and toddlers aged birth to two years (35 months) who have a medical condition likely to result in a developmental delay or who have developmental delays.

- Anyone can make an EarlySteps referral: parents, teachers, and pediatricians.
- Eligibility is determined through an evaluation process.
- Outcomes and activities are developed to address the needs of both the child and family.
- If a child is determined eligible for services, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be developed.
- A Family Service Coordinator will help ensure early intervention services and supports are provided.



Guiding and Supporting Families Through the Referral Process (Ages Birth - 2)

Once educators and families have worked together to determine the individual needs for the child, educators should guide families through the referral process and examine supports that are available. Children **ages birth to two** who score in the **at-risk** range on a developmental screening should be referred to EarlySteps. The flowchart below indicates the steps that should be taken to maximize support for children B-3 and their families.

Step 1: Referral to EarlySteps

Anyone can make an Early Steps referral, including parents, teachers, and pediatricians. Children can be referred to EarlySteps by contacting the System Point of Entry (SPOE) in their region.

Step 2: System Point of Entry

Once the System Point of Entry (SPOE) receives the referral, the family will be contacted to begin the eligibility determination process.

Step 3: Eligibility Determination

If the child under the age of 3 qualifies for EarlySteps, a team works with the family to develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that will include intervention services and supports.



School District (ages 3-5)

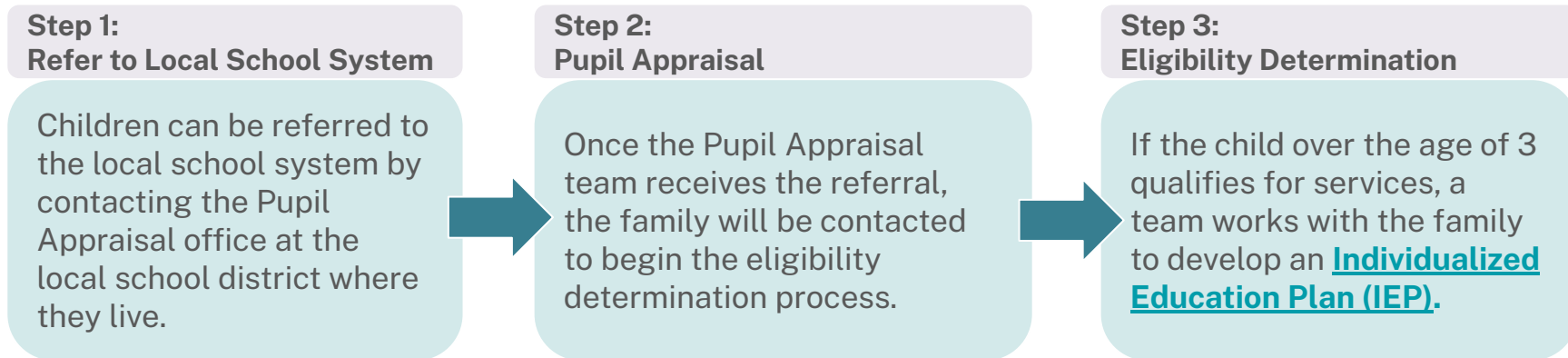
School Systems provide services to families with children ages three and older that may be eligible to receive special education services:

- Parent/Guardian/School Personnel can make a referral. Referrals are sent through Pupil Appraisal/Child Find at the local school system.
- A team of qualified professionals works with the child and family to make this determination.
- An evaluation will include hearing and vision screening, health and medical history, developmental history, cognitive development, adaptive development, interpersonal skills development, communication development, present levels of functioning, and physical development.
- *A Child's disability must impact academic performance.*
- If a child is determined eligible for services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed.
- A special education teacher and/or related service provider will provide services.



Guiding and Supporting Families Through the Referral Process (Ages 3 - 5)

Once educators and families have worked together to determine the individual needs for the child, educators should guide families through the referral process and examine supports that are available. Children **ages three to five** who score in the **at-risk** range should be referred to the local school system where they live. The flowchart below indicates the steps that should be taken to maximize support for children and families.





Transitioning from EarlySteps to School-based Services

Transitioning from EarlySteps to School-based services

As children receiving EarlySteps (IDEA Part C) services approach their third birthday, they transition from early intervention services to school-based special education services (IDEA Part B) if they are found eligible.

Transition Planning

1

EarlySteps starts planning with the family before the child's third birthday.

Referral to the School System

2

With parent consent, the child is referred to the local school district.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation

3

The school district completes evaluations to assess eligibility.

Eligibility Determination

4

A team reviews results with the family to determine Part B eligibility.

IEP Development

5

If eligible, the team develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

School-Based Services Begin

6

Special education services begin in the least restrictive environment.





Supporting Young Children with Disabilities in the Classroom

Staff Support

Support must be available for those who work with young children with disabilities to help them support the children in their care and promote their success. Supports may include the following:

- Attending early childhood conferences or training that is related to the needs of the children in their care
- Getting help from other staff members or administrators
- Having an extra set of hands in the classroom to support the needs of these children
- Getting specialized equipment or teaching materials that can enhance the early learning experience in the classroom



Center Support

- Children with disabilities need access to high-quality early childhood programs.
- Young children with disabilities should be included in settings alongside their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible.
- Child care sites can improve their practices of working with young children with disabilities by tapping into the resources provided by their directors, master coaches, and service providers such as speech or occupational therapists, to meet the needs of each individual child in their care.





Collaborating for Service Delivery

Collaborating for Service Delivery

Plan for collaborative service delivery in the least restrictive environment:

- The early interventionist educator/special education teacher and therapists should go to the regular early childhood program to provide services in the setting the parent has selected.
- The early interventionist/special education educator should provide coaching and direct services in the early childhood classroom.
- The special education teacher and early childhood teacher should collaboratively plan and co-teach activities.



Guidance for Directors

“What policies can I put in place to ensure that young children with disabilities receive their services from service providers while also protecting the children in my care?”

- All service providers that provide IDEA, Part C services for children in early learning centers must obtain a criminal background check for child care purposes from the Department for not only its employees but also for contract employees providing these services in early learning centers.
- According to Bulletin 137, children can be left alone with licensed therapeutic professionals without child care staff present.
- Post the center schedule for therapeutic professionals to be able to view appropriate times available for service provision.
- Discuss any time conflicts with therapeutic professionals.



Guidance for Service Providers

“In what way can I expect child care sites to accommodate or collaborate so that the children can receive services outlined in the IFSP/IEP?”

Strategies for effective collaboration may include the following:

- The child care director can provide the center schedule for therapeutic professionals to view appropriate times that are available while children are learning in an early learning setting.
- Service providers should view the center schedule, collaborate with the child care director, and determine a time that best meets the needs of the child.





Resources

Resources for Providers

There are many resources available to help families and providers navigate special education and related services and understand what steps to take when a child is not meeting developmental milestones.

Those resources include the following:

- [Learn The Signs. Act Early.](#)
 - A federally-mandated program of the CDC that encourages parents of child ages birth to 5 years to learn the signs of healthy development, monitor early developments, and act early on developmental concerns.
- [Special Education Processes and Procedural Safeguards](#)
 - A guide that explains the special education process, including referral, evaluation, eligibility, IEP development, related services, and the rights and procedural safeguards available to children with disabilities and their families.

Resources

Please contact emily.coussou@la.gov with questions.

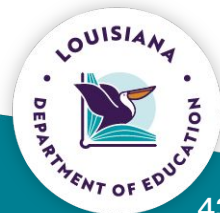


Resources for Providers

- [Early Childhood Developmental Screening Guidebook](#)
 - A guide on how to support healthy growth and development of children throughout key developmental stages and how to identify children who may benefit from specialized support.
- [Early Childhood Developmental Screening and Referral Quick Guide](#)
 - A quick guide for educators that provides the step-by-step process for identifying, referring, and supporting young children who may have developmental delays.
- [Early Childhood Transition Process](#)
 - A guide to help families of young children with disabilities navigate the system of special education from ages birth to 5.

Resources

Please contact emily.coussou@la.gov with questions.



Questions



Questions

Please contact Emily.coussou@la.gov with questions.



Upcoming Events



Monthly Young Children with Disabilities Community of Practice

The early childhood strategy team conducts a monthly Community of Practice on various topics related to young children with disabilities. The next YCWD Community of Practice webinar will have guest speakers presenting on **Guidelines for Working with Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing B-5.**

Attendees can access the webinar using the information below:

- **Webinar Date/Time:** Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at 3 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/99301224453>
- **Phone Number:** 1-312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 993 0122 4453
- **Passcode:** 497464

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

Please contact Emily.coussou@la.gov with questions.

