



Child Find Policy 2018

INTRODUCTION

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School (AELPCS) is responsible for conducting continuous efforts intended to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22) years of age enrolled in AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School, including children with disabilities who are homeless, children who are in the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) or committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency (DYRS), children who are making progress grade to grade, and highly mobile children, who are in need of special education and related services. These duties are called Child Find responsibilities. This policy establishes procedures for fulfilling Child Find responsibilities at AELPCS, and applies to all children enrolled in AELPCS and all staff employed by AELPCS. AELPCS staff is expected to know and act in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by this policy. AELPCS trains staff on an annual basis to ensure staff understand and execute Child Find responsibilities.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Parents are encouraged to speak with any AELPCS staff if they have concerns about their child. Parents and other stakeholders should contact

one of the following AELPCS staff to discuss Child Find, the referral process, and the availability of special education programming at AELPCS:

Jenna Umansky
Special Education Manager
202-813-3359
Jenna.Umansky@appletreeinstitute.org

Melanney Beckles
Assistant Special Education Manager
202-630-2330
Melanney.Beckles@appletreeinstitute.org

TARGET POPULATIONS

This policy and AELPCS Child Find efforts apply to children between the ages of three (3) and six (6) years of age enrolled in AELPCS, including children who are:

- Homeless;
- In the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency;
- Committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency;
- Making progress grade to grade; and
- Highly mobile children.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

To ensure the local and school communities are aware of the availability of special education and related services for eligible children with disabilities

and the methods for requesting such services, AELPCS provides public notice through a variety of methods:

- AELPCS provides information to parents and the school community at school events such as parent-teacher conferences, summer enrollment events, citywide school fairs, etc.;
- AELPCS publishes information and relevant dates in school manuals, calendars, and on its [website](#);
- AELPCS staff provides information to parents during parent teacher conferences;
- Brochures regarding special education services are available for parents and the public

COORDINATION WITH NON-EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT AGENCIES

To ensure coordination with appropriate District agencies to facilitate the identification, location, and evaluation of children with disabilities enrolled in AELPCS, AELPCS maintains contacts with the following District agencies:

- District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Early Stages program;
- The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA);
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH);

AELPCS conducts regular meetings with representatives of the above agencies to ensure open and cooperative lines of communication regarding AELPCS's Child Find, referral, and initial evaluation processes and procedures, as well as continuously updating agencies of changes in appropriate points of contact. AELPCS may establish agreements with other entities responsible for administering various education, health, and social service programs to children from birth through age 22. Those agencies include, but are not limited to: District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Healthcare Finance (DHCF), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS).

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parents may obtain information about the availability of special education and related services through this policy, information posted on our [website](#), or by contacting the Special Education Manager at 202-813-3359. AELPCS also maintains written materials for parents, which can be obtained from the Special Education Coordinator at each campus. AELPCS staff is required to provide information to parents upon request and at parent-teacher conferences.

REFERRAL PROCESSES

A referral is documentation provided by the child's parent, or other referral source, which clearly states why it is thought that the child may have a disability. AELPCS is required to complete an initial evaluation and determine if a child is a child with a disability eligible for special education and related services under IDEA within 120 days of receipt of a referral. The 120-day requirement does not apply if:

- The parent fails or refuses to respond to a request for consent for the evaluation;
- The parent of the child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation; or
- The child enrolls in another LEA prior to the determination of eligibility.

If a parent or community member would like to request an initial evaluation to determine if a child is in need of special education and related services, please contact Jenna Umansky, Special Education Manager, 202-813-3359, Jenna.Umansky@appletreeinstitute.org, 1801 Mississippi Ave, Third Floor, SE, Washington, DC, 20020

All AELPCS staff must accept an oral or written referral for initial evaluation. Upon receiving an oral referral, AELPCS staff must assist any outside referral source in documenting the referral in writing, and must document the date of the referral within three (3) business days of receipt. AELPCS provides a referral form to assist parents and other parties in documenting a referral. To obtain this form, please contact Jenna Umansky, Special Education Manager, 202-813-3359, Jenna.Umansky@appletreeinstitute.org, 1801 Mississippi Ave, Third Floor SE, Washington, DC, 20020

AELPCS accepts referrals for initial evaluation from the following persons:

- A student's parent or guardian;
- Employees of AELPCS who has knowledge of the student.

For children under the age of 6, AELPCS also accepts referrals from:

- Pediatricians or other medical professionals, including physicians, hospitals, and other health providers;
- Child development facilities, including day care centers, child care centers, and early childhood programs;
- District agencies and programs, including IDEA Part C programs ;
- Community and civic organizations;
- Advocacy organizations.

AELPCS maintains regular contact with community-based referral sources, and works to collaborate with community-based service providers to provide information on the availability of special education and related services and the means through which parents or organizations may submit a referral. After AELPCS has received a referral, AELPCS must make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation, which includes attempting to contact the parent at least three (3) times on three (3) different dates using at least two (2) modalities. AELPCS shall conduct an analysis of existing data on the student to determine if

additional assessments are necessary. Existing data that may be considered and may include but is not limited to teacher observations, classroom assessments, schoolwide screenings and assessments, state assessments, student grades and records, parent reports, health records, or data from other interventions. AELPCS will provide the parent of a child suspected of having a disability with information about the nature of any additionally required assessment.

SCREENINGS

AELPCS implements a comprehensive screening process to determine if a child should be referred for an evaluation, the result of which is provided to the child's parent. Screenings utilize Every Child Ready assessments and an intelligibility screener, which applied across the entire student population. Parent consent is not required for AELPCS to conduct a uniform, school wide screening. A screening conducted by a AELPCS teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation does not constitute an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services and does not require parent consent. AELPCS screenings must not delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

AELPCS Response to Intervention (RtI) efforts must not delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

TRANSITION FROM PART C

Under IDEA, AELPCS must ensure a smooth and effective transition for children transitioning from Part C early intervention services to Part B

special education and related services. In furtherance of this responsibility, AELPCS:

- Identifies incoming children that were served by Strong Start DC Early Intervention Program (DC EIP) prior to enrollment at AELPCS, and participates in transition activities as appropriate at the request of DC EIP; and

- As applicable, regularly coordinates with DCPS Early Stages to ensure a smooth and transition for students served by DCPS Early Stages prior to enrollment in the AELPCS. When a child is transitioning from Part C to Part B services, AELPCS participates in transition planning conferences as appropriate, and ensures each child with a disability has an IEP developed and implemented by the child's third birthday.

PARENT PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS AND RIGHTS

Parents' legal rights during the Child Find process are defined by IDEA and District of Columbia law. In the event of a disagreement, parents may pursue dispute resolution and due process rights, including mediation, due process complaints, or state complaints. Parents can learn more about their rights under IDEA by referring to the Part B Procedural Safeguards located on OSSE's [website](#) or by contacting the Special Education Manager to obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards.

DATA REPORTING

In accordance with District of Columbia law, AELPCS counts and reports the number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services count annually on October 5 or the date set for the annual pupil count required by D.C. Official Code § 38-2906.