

# REFERRAL PROCESS FOR NORTH CAROLINA

If you suspect a child has a developmental delay or disability you can refer to early intervention or special education for evaluation and, if found eligible, services and supports.

All children ages 0-21 are entitled to free evaluation for developmental delay or disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Use the chart to the right to determine how to refer a child for evaluation based on the child's age.

NOTE: Once a referral is made, the evaluation must occur within 45 days.

## HOW OLD IS THE CHILD?

### UNDER 3

#### EARLY INTERVENTION PROCESS

Early intervention is a system of services that helps babies and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. No family is ever denied service because of their inability to pay.

### 3 YEARS+

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

Special education is instruction specifically designed to meet the educational and developmental needs of children with disabilities, or those who are experiencing developmental delays. Services for preschool children (ages 3 through 5) are provided free of charge through the public school system.

Go to North Carolina Early Intervention website

Go to North Carolina Exceptional Children website

<https://beearly.nc.gov/>

<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/>

Find your local CDSA

Find your local LEA

<https://beearly.nc.gov/index.php/contact/cdsa>

<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/directory/lea-ec-program-directors>

Call the number for your local CDSA or LEA and ask to **make a referral**. Make sure you know the full name, birthdate, and address of the child.