



# **The Special Education Process**

---





U.S. Office of Special  
Education Program

# Who are we?

- We are Arkansas' Parent Training Information Center
- We are a statewide organization with Regional Mentors
- We are funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), grants, and private donations

# Parent Training and Information Centers

Serve

Serve families of children from birth to age 26 with disabilities

Help

Help families and other agencies understand the benefits of IDEA and Section 504

Provide

Provide a variety of free services including individual support, workshops, publications, community events, social media connections, etc.

Work

Work together with stakeholders to improve outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities

# **Our Director Shelby Knight**

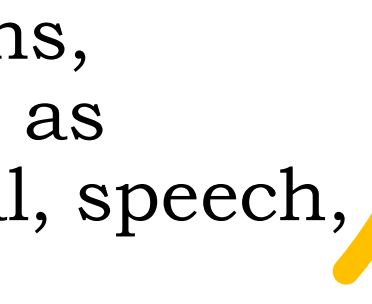




Meet our Team!

<https://thecenterforexceptionalfamilies.org/our-team/parent-mentors/>

# Early Detection is vital!

- Early resources and supports are very important for young children and their families because they improve outcomes.
  - Service providers can help families determine if their child(ren) may need a referral for consideration of an evaluation and possible services.
  - Some service providers who may be able to help are pediatricians, specialists, therapists such as mental health, occupational, speech, etc.
- 



# What do parents do when they suspect their child may have a disability

---

- IF a parent has a child ages birth to age 3 and suspect their child has a disability, they may contact First Connections at 1-800-643-8258





# First Connections continued...

---

- Parents who suspect their child aged 3-5 may have a disability should contact First Connections. Families with children of that age group will be connected to Arkansas DESE (Division of Elementary and Secondary Education) for Early Childhood Services.



# Arkansas Child Find

- Child Find is a part of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) that requires states to have a comprehensive system to identify, locate, and evaluate children who need early intervention or special education services.
- Child Find is a process in which schools are committed to helping all children succeed.
- Screenings and evaluation services are free and confidential.
- Contact your child's principal or teacher for more information.

# What milestones are considered when looking at developmental delays?



Vision and  
Hearing issues



Motor  
coordination/  
Motor control



Delays with  
Social Skills



Behavioral  
challenges



Cognitive or  
academic  
difficulties



Speech or  
communication  
difficulties

# Who can make a referral?

- A parent, family member, teacher or other person who is worried about a child's development can make a referral. This may include the same concerns as those listed with Arkansas Child Find:
- Academic progress
- Behavioral needs





# The Referral Process and Timelines

- A referral or request for consideration of an evaluation can be verbal however, a referral form which can be attained from the school will begin referral process.
- A timeline is established under the IDEA for the referral process.
- The referral timeline begins once the referral is received by the school. The school has **21 days** to hold the conference. The school has **7 days** to contact the parent once the referral has been received. A conference is then scheduled, within the next **14 days**.

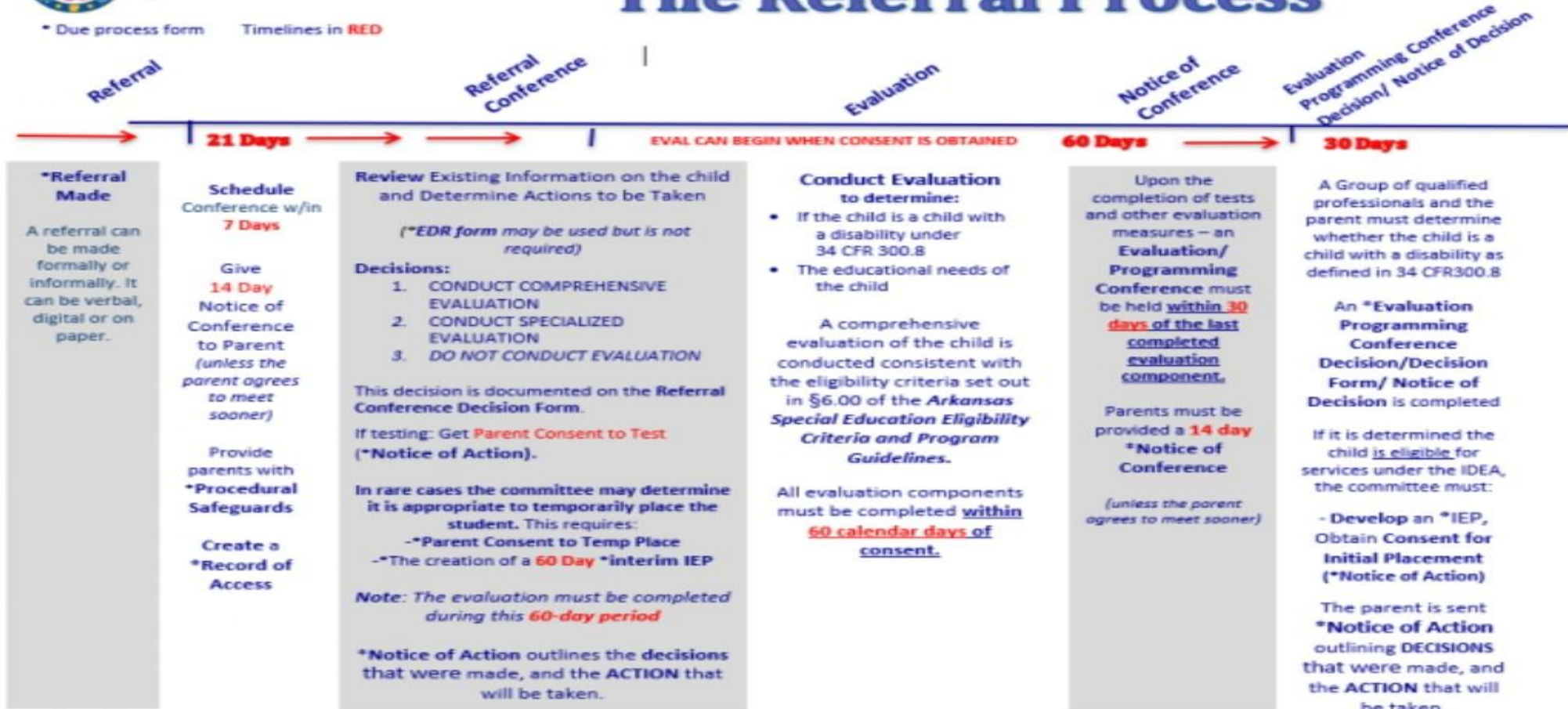
# Referral Process from ADE



Arkansas Department of Education  
Special Education Unit

\* Due process form Timelines in RED

## The Referral Process



# Team Meeting



- The referral conference is a team meeting.
- The team is made up by the parent, the teacher, a principal or district representative.
- This is the time when the person making the referral can share their concerns about the student.
- Then the team decides if an evaluation is needed.



# The Evaluation

- IDEA has established a timeline for educational evaluations. The school has **60 days** to complete an evaluation once the parent has given written consent at the referral conference. (Parents also will receive a copy of Parental Rights under IDEA).
- Once the last component of an evaluation is complete the school will then have **30 days** to hold an Evaluation Programming Conference (EPC)

# What is next?

---

- The school will send the parent a Notice of Conference for the EPC.
- At the EPC the school will share the evaluation report with the team.
- The committee will find out if the student meets the criteria for a disability under IDEA Section 300.8. There are 13 categories of disability.
- Then they will determine the student's programming needs.



# Next Steps

This completes the referral process.

Once the EPC is held and if the student has a disability under IDEA guidelines, the team develops an IEP which is an Individual Education Program.

With the referral process complete, the team enters the very important task of programming for the student.

If you want to know more, we offer training on IEPs and 504s!



Thank you  
for your  
participation!

- PO Box 16125  
Jonesboro, AR 72403
- Phone: 1 (888) 360-9654
- [www.tcfef.org](http://www.tcfef.org)

