

Child Search Policy

The Louisiana Department of Education requires that each district have policies and procedures in place to ensure that all students with disabilities residing in the State are identified, located, and evaluated. Through child search activities, children and youth needing special education services are identified, located, and evaluated.

Child Search Procedures

Child Search Responsibilities

The St. James Parish School District identifies, locates, and evaluates all students, birth through 21 years of age, suspected of having a disability and in need of special education and/or related services residing within its jurisdiction.

The St. James Parish School District has established procedures that outline how the district will conduct Child Search activities and the ways it will ensure that ongoing identification activities are conducted to identify, locate, and evaluate each student suspected of having a disability and in need of special education and/or related services.

Children addressed through Child Search activities include the following:

- Homeless,
- Ward of the State,
- In private schools,
- Advancing from grade to grade, and
- Highly mobile and/or migrant

Bulletin 1508 §103 states:

- Students enrolled in an educational program operated by or under the jurisdiction of the St. James Parish School District
- Students enrolled in a private school program within the geographical jurisdiction of the St. James Parish School District
- Children enrolled in a public or private preschool or daycare program
- Children not enrolled in a school (excluding students who have graduated with a regular high school diploma), including preschool-aged children
- Students who are suspected of having exceptionality and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade
- Students who are highly mobile, including migrant students
- Children who are transiting out of Early Steps programs and suspected of continuing to have a disability and need special education services

Child Search Activities

Child Search applies to any student suspected of having a disability, birth through 21 years of age, and not currently receiving special education and/or related services. Child Search also applies to individuals who may be suspected of having a gifted and/or talented exceptionality.

The St. James Parish School District completes the following Child Search activities:

- Disseminates information to the public related to Child Search activities
- Actively pursues the identification and location of eligible students by developing flyers, brochures, or other media to notify the public of Child Search activities
- Identified one individual who will coordinate all Child Search activities and maintain documentation on those activities, the Pupil Appraisal Supervisor

In addition, the St. James Parish School District also completes the following:

Early Intervention Services

See Preschool Screening and Referral Procedures

Child Search screening will take place every 45 days, throughout the year, including during months when school is not in session.

Infants and Toddlers Birth- 3 years of age

St. James Parish Child Search Coordinator (Pupil Appraisal Supervisor) makes a referral to Early Steps for children birth- 3 years of age. Early Steps is responsible for identification and services up to the children's 3rd birthday.

If the child is 2.9 years of age and not receiving services through Early Steps, St. James Parish will take the referral, screen the child, and, if required, begin the evaluation process.

Preschool 3-5 years of age – Not attending a Parish school

If the child is not attending a Parish Preschool program but resides in the St. James Parish, the Parish will take the referral, screen the child, and, if required, begin the evaluation process.

Birth-3 years of age

- Disseminate flyers and brochures to local doctors' offices, hospitals, community centers, and early childhood programs.
- Disseminate information to parents registering for preschool programs
- Attend Early Steps transition meetings and disseminate information to parents
- Participate in inter-agency meetings and community activities
- Disseminate Renata D. notice to preschool and Head Start programs, including students enrolled in a public or private preschool or daycare program
- Post flyers, brochures, and posters in each school and central office within the district.
- Train early childhood program staff on their child search duties and the district's policy and procedures.
- Publicize early childhood screenings on the district's website. These will take place every 45 days, throughout the year, including during months when school is not in session.

Kindergarten-12th Grade

- Disseminate Renata D. notice to every student in the districts, and parochial schools within St. James Parish's jurisdiction
- Publish a public service announcement detailing the Child Search activities with contact information in local newspapers twice per year.
- Disseminate Child Search flyers and brochures with contact information to local churches
- Posts a public service announcement detailing the Child Search activities with contact information on the district's website
- Publicize procedures for referring a student suspected of a disability during the months when school is not in session.

Child Search for Students Attending a St. James Parish School

St. James Parish has a comprehensive Response to Intervention (RtI) system with written guidelines on making a referral to the School Building Level Committee (SBLC) when the team suspects a student may have a disability. See the RtI Handbook for the referral process and procedures.

St. James Parish has a written School Building Level Committee (SBLC) handbook that details what a person (parent, teacher, caregiver, etc.) should do if they have concerns about a student's academic, social, emotional, or behavioral needs and want to make a verbal or written request for assistance. The SBLC procedures are for all students attending a St. James Parish School (Preschool-12th Grade). The SBLC committee is responsible for arranging the help a student needs to succeed in school, including the possibility of a Section 504 Plan or an evaluation under Bulletin 1508 for special education services. See the SBLC handbook for details of the referral process.

When school is not in session, a person with concerns about a student and suspects a disability may call the school office to speak with the assistant principal or principal about their problems. When the SBLC team returns to school, the team will contact the concerned individual and discuss their specific concerns. Contact will be made within the first 30 days of returning to school.

Child Search Coordinator

The St. James Parish School District has designated the Pupal Appraisal Supervisor as the Child Search Coordinator for the district, and this individual is responsible for the following:

- Collecting data on all Child Search referrals and ensuring the necessary steps are taken to address the student's needs
- Conducting all Child Search awareness activities
- Tracking data to ensure compliance with LOE requirements. All data collected are maintained in a safe and confidential manner
- Provide the parent of each student initially suspected of having a disability and in need of special education and/or related services with a copy of the procedural safeguards. This includes an opportunity for an explanation of the safeguards
- Implementing activities as required under IDEA, Part C (Early Steps)
- Ensuring district representation at transition meetings for students receiving services from Early Steps

- Meeting and coordinating services with district staff about early childhood and preschool students
- Attends inter-agency meetings and LOE meetings related to Child Search Activities

Child Search for Parentally Placed Private School Students

The St. James Parish School District is responsible for locating, identifying, and evaluating students suspected of having a disability enrolled by their parents in private schools. Including elementary and secondary religious schools if those schools are within the St. James Parish School District's jurisdiction.

Child search activities ensure equitable participation of parentally placed private school students. Child search activities are implemented like those undertaken for public school students and conducted within the exact timelines.