



## **REACH FOR THE STARS**

### **CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

#### **HELPING YOUR CHILD OVERCOME OBSTACLES & REALIZE POTENTIAL**

This section provides information and tools for parents and caregivers so they can navigate the education system, effectively advocate for their children and ensure that they receive appropriate services, overcome obstacles and realize their potential.

*Naples Alliance for Children thanks the many professionals and parents who are part of the NAFC Learning Difficulties Taskforce. This document is part of an initiative to inform parents, care givers, children's health and service providers, schools, and the community on how they can join together to insure that our future generations are informed, productive citizens.*

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Naples Alliance for Children

For Further help and information call  
Naples Alliance for Children, 239-649-5260,  
e-mail [info@napleschild.org](mailto:info@napleschild.org) or  
log into our website, [www.napleschild.org](http://www.napleschild.org)

# YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

## Birth to 5 Years

Listed below are developmental skills that typically occur by the age noted. These are only general guidelines – all children develop at different rates.

Information provided by FDLRS Child Find

### Birth to 6 Months

- Turns toward sounds
- Laughs, squeals, or babbles to people
- Holds onto your finger
- Reaches for rattle or toy

### 6 Month to 1 year

- Crawls
- Sits without support
- Jabbers at length
- Plays pat-a-cake
- Recognizes mother (or primary care giver)

### 1 Year to 18 Months

- Points to at least 2 body parts when asked
- Names 2 or more objects
- Reacts to Parents coming and going
- Is beginning to feed self
- Walks without help

### 16 Months to 2 Years

- Drinks from cup without help
- Can build a tower of 3 or 4 blocks
- Says the name of 5 or more objects
- Shows interest in other children
- Can follow a simple direction

### 2 to 3 Years

- Puts words together to make simple sentences
- Uses spoon and fork to feed self
- Can hold and mark with a pencil or crayon
- Can climb the ladder on a slide
- Can identify happy, sad, angry and afraid
- Claims things as “mine”
- Runs with ease

### 3 to 4 Years

- Can pedal a tricycle or “big wheel”
- Is toilet trained
- Counts to 5
- Plays in a small group (shares, takes turns)
- Asks “what,” “where” and “why” questions
- Speech is easily understood by others

### 4 to 5 Years

- Can throw and catch a ball
- Can tell a story with a beginning, middle, and end from looking at a picture
- Copies simple shapes (circle, square, and triangle)
- Uses complete sentences in conversation
- Tries to write some letters of his/her name

For More information See American Academy of Pediatrics Web Site

<http://www.aap.org>

Health Topics - Developmental Stages

# CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

## 5 Basic Steps for Ages Zero to Five

- 1 Parents talk to child's pediatrician or health care provider**
  - a Request a developmental screening
  - b Express your specific concerns clearly and ask questions
  
- 2 If a Pediatrician/health care provider**
  - a Determines concerns**
    - May refer you to a specialist
    - May refer you to agencies to help screen or evaluate your child for possible delays.
  - b Suggests a "wait and see approach" but you still have unanswered concerns call FDLRS (Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System) at (239) 337-8363 or 1-866-551-8363**
  
- 3 Parents make request to FDLRS for screening, assistance and information**
  - a Child (ages birth to three years) referred to Early Steps
  - b Child ( ages three to five years) referred to Child Find
  
- 4 Staff of Early Steps/Child Find will contact parents**
  - a To gather information
  - b To schedule screening/evaluation
  
- 5 If a child is found eligible through**
  - a Early Steps**
    - Service coordinator facilitates proposed interventions
    - Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) is written
    - Family chooses provider of services
  
  - b Child Find**
    - Child referred to school system for full PreK evaluation or Speech/Language
    - School District provides evaluation
    - School District provides Exceptional Education services, if child is eligible by State criteria

# CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL AGE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

## 11 Basic Steps for Ages Five to Twenty-one

1. **Parents talk to pediatrician or health provider (after the child is identified by parent, teacher, self or other interested party) as possibly needing screening/evaluation.**
  - a. Request Developmental Screening
  - b. Express your specific concerns clearly and ask questions
2. **Parents contact school guidance counselor, teacher, principal or psychologist.**
  - a. Express your specific concerns clearly and ask questions
  - b. School will conduct a Child & Adolescent Support Team (CAST) meeting
    - \* The CAST Team may include the school counselor, psychologist, teacher appropriate to the grade level, and other professionals depending on the child's specific need
    - \* The CAST Team will review all available data and develop interventions to help the child to be successful in **general education**
3. **If your child is not meeting grade or age based expectations after receiving increased level of interventions in general education, the CAST team may recommend that your child be evaluated for further services.**
  - a. School must ask parent for consent to evaluate for special services
  - b. Evaluation must be specific to the child and must examine all aspects of suspected disability
  - c. Evaluation must be completed within 60 school days after parental consent
  - d. If parent does not agree with evaluation, an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) may be requested by parent. Parents must ask school district to pay for the evaluation before the IEE occurs
  - e. Second language or sign language interpreters will be provided at no cost to the parent upon request
4. **Eligibility and need for special programming is determined.**
  - a. Parents and educators review all evaluation and other data to determine if child is a "*student with a disability*" in accordance with legal criteria
  - b. If parents do not agree with eligibility decision, they may request a mediation or hearing
5. **If your child is found eligible for services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

Within 30 days of finding a student eligible, the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team and the parents must meet to write the child's IEP (Individualized Education Program)

**6. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is scheduled.**

**School staff must:**

- a. Notify parents in writing of the location, time and purpose of the meeting
- b. Notify other participants
- c. Schedule the meeting at a time convenient to all parties
- d. Notify the parents that they can bring people who have knowledge of the child and/or special education (Parents should notify school of individuals who will attend)
- e. Notify parents that, upon request, they may have an interpreter (Second language or sign language interpreters will be provided at no cost)

**7. An IEP meeting is held and the IEP is written**

- a. The IEP team, which includes parents and child (when appropriate), write the student's IEP defining Present Levels of Educational Performance Statement (PLEPS), measurable goals and objectives, and any necessary related services
- b. Parent must sign the IEP giving consent for services to begin.
- c. If parents do not agree with the placement, parents may request mediation at the district level
- d. If mediation fails, parents may file a complaint with the state education agency; a due process hearing must be held and mediation must be available

**8. After the IEP is written, services are provided**

- a. Parents are given copy of IEP
- b. Child's teachers and service providers must have access to the IEP
- c. Child's teachers and service providers must know their responsibilities in carrying out IEP; school personnel make certain IEP is implemented

**9. Progress is measured and reported to parents**

Child's progress toward annual goals is reported to parents at every interim and grading report period

**10. The IEP is reviewed.**

- a. The IEP team reviews child's IEP at least once a year
- b. The IEP may be revised at any time during the school year at request of parent or the school
- c. If parents do not agree with the IEP, they may seek mediation, a due process hearing, or file a complaint with the state

**11. The child is reevaluated**

- a. A child's continued eligibility and IEP must be reevaluated at least every three years. Formal evaluation of the student is not required if sufficient data exists to determine continued need, eligibility, PLEPS, goals and objectives and related services
- b. A child may be reevaluated more often if conditions warrant it, or if the parent or school request reevaluation

# LEARNING DIFFICULTIES RESOURCES AND LINKS

## INFORMATION & REFERRAL

NAFC Resource Directory of Child & Family Services [www.napleschild.org](http://www.napleschild.org)  
Naples Alliance for Children: Phone (239) 649-5260

## HEALTH CARE:

Collier County Medical Society (Find a local physician)

[www.ccmsonline.org](http://www.ccmsonline.org)

Phone (239) 435-7727

CHS Healthcare

[www.collier.org](http://www.collier.org)

Phone (239) 658-3000

Children's Medical Services/Early Steps

<http://www.cms-kids.com>

Phone (239) 433-6700

Healthy Start

[www.healthystartswfl.com](http://www.healthystartswfl.com)

Phone (239) 252-8551

KidCare Insurance program

[www.floridakidcare.org](http://www.floridakidcare.org)

Phone 1-888-540-KIDS (1-888-540-5437)

Collier County Health Department (239) 252-2674

## SCREENING, TESTING, REFERRAL SERVICES

Collier County Public Schools: Phone 239-377-0001

<http://www.collier.k12.fl.us>

Exceptional Student Education (ESE): Phone (239) 377-0131

Student Services (Guidance/Psychology) Phone (239) 377-0505

FDLRS Child Find (Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System)

<http://leeschools.net/orgs/fdlrs>

Phone (239) 337-8363

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

<http://www.ronaldmchouse.com/care-mobile.asp>

Phone (239) 658-3050

**LEGAL AID** (for students with unmet needs due to learning and/or other disabilities)

Legal Aid Education Legal Rights Project

<http://www.legalaid.org/collier>

Phone: [239] 775-4555