



Child Find and Support for Students with Disabilities

What is Child Find?

Local Education Agencies must have procedures in place in order to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities residing in the District who are in need of special education and related services, including children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities.

As such, Girls Global Academy takes a proactive approach to assessing all students and monitoring for signs of progress, or lack thereof, that may be indicative of deficits in student performance that require an evaluation for special education services. We use a Response to Intervention approach that allows for a robust cache of Tier 2 services meant to give access to quality research-based interventions to any students who have demonstrated evidence of struggling with the grade level academic and functional expectations outlined in our general education curriculum. Students who have received appropriate Tier 2 and who fail to make expected progress accordingly, may qualify for special education services, and should be referred for a special education evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Under the IDEA, Girls Global Academy 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 Girls Global Academy, 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 Girls Global Academy, and applies to all children enrolled in Girls Global Academy and all staff employed by Girls Global Academy. Girls Global Academy staff is expected to know

and act in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by this policy. Girls Global Academy 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 Girls Global Academy staff if they have concerns about their child. Parents and other stakeholders should contact one of the following Girls Global Academy staff to discuss Child Find, the referral process, and the availability of special education programming at Girls Global Academy:

Paige Fryer - Student Support Services Coordinator

paige@girlsglobalacademy.org

Jackie Sylvain - Wellness Coordinator

jsylvain@girlsglobalacademy.org

Shayne Swift - Principal

shayne@girlsglobalacademy.org

Target Populations

This policy and Girls Global Academy Child Find efforts apply to children between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22) years of age enrolled in Girls Global Academy. However, Girls Global Academy currently only serves students in DC who are enrolled in grades 9-12, those students serve as our target population 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, Girls Global Academy provides public notice through a variety of methods:

- Girls Global Academy provides information to parents and the school community at school events such as parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school events, summer enrollment events, etc.;
- Girls Global Academy publishes information and relevant dates in school manuals, calendars, and on its website.
- Brochures regarding special education services are available for parents and the public in the front office.

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 Girls Global Academy, Girls Global Academy maintains contacts with the following District agencies:

- The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA);
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)

Girls Global Academy conducts meetings as needed with representatives of the above agencies to ensure open and cooperative lines of communication regarding Girls Global Academy's Child Find, referral, and initial evaluation processes and procedures, as well as continuously updating agencies of changes in appropriate points of contact.

Girls Global Academy 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 at girlsglobalacademy.org, or by contacting Paige Fryer at paige@girlsglobalacademy.org. Girls Global Academy also maintains written materials for parents, which can be found at the school's front office. Girls Global Academy staff is required to provide information to parents upon request and at parent-teacher conferences.

Referral Process

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. Girls Global Academy 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 60 days of receipt of parental consent. Girls Global Academy is required to contact the parent to set up an appointment to review the referral process and get consent within 30 days of the referral.

The 60-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 Paige Fryer at paige@girlsglobalacademy.org. All Girls Global Academy staff must accept an oral or written referral for initial evaluation. Upon receiving an oral referral, Girls Global Academy 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. If the staff member documenting the initial parent referral is not Paige Fryer at paige@girlsglobalacademy.org then that staff member must bring the written referral to Shayne Swift at shayne@girlsglobalacademy.org immediately (within in the next 4 hours) either in person or by email.

Girls Global Academy accepts referrals for initial evaluation from the following persons:

- A student's parent;
- The student, provided that educational rights have transferred to the student;
- Employees of Girls Global Academy who has knowledge of the student; and
- Employees of another LEA or OSSE, who have knowledge of the student.

Girls Global Academy 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 Girls Global Academy has received a referral, Girls Global Academy must make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation within 30 days of the referral, which includes attempting to contact the parent at least three (3) times on three (3) different dates using at least two (2) modalities. Reasonable efforts must begin no later than 10 business days from the referral date. Girls Global Academy shall conduct an analysis of existing data on the student to determine if additional assessments are necessary. Existing data that may be considered 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. Girls Global Academy will provide the parent of a child suspected of having a disability with information about the nature of any additionally required assessment.

Screenings and Response to Interventions

Girls Global Academy implements a comprehensive screening process to determine if a child should be referred for an evaluation. Screenings utilize assessments and tools that are generally applied across the entire student population. Parental consent is not required for Girls Global Academy to conduct a uniform, school-wide screening. A screening conducted by a Girls Global Academy 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 parental consent.

At all grade levels, school staff use interim assessments, classroom data, attendance, behavioral records, and other data to determine if students require additional interventions through the Girls Global Academy Response to Intervention (RtI) efforts.

Girls Global Academy screenings and 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.

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

<https://osse.dc.gov/publication/rights-parents-students-disabilities-idea-part-b-notice-procedural-safeguards> or by contacting Paige Fryer at paige@girlsglobalacademy.org to obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards.

Data Reporting

In accordance with District of Columbia law, Girls Global Academy 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.

^[1] The ability of Girls Global Academy to share personal information about a child shall be governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC §1232g, 34 CFR Part 99.