

Development Evaluation Centers (DEC)

OVERVIEW

What is it?

Eighteen centers throughout the state with interdisciplinary staffs provide clinical evaluations, treatment, and case management services for children who have known or suspected developmental disabilities.

Who is it for?

Children who have or are suspected to have physical, psychological, neuromotor, socio-emotional, speech, language, hearing or learning problems. Preference is given to children under age five, but some older children are served.

Where are applications taken?

Children birth up to age three can apply to the DEC directly, or to the interagency coordinating councils responsible for the IDEA program (see Chapter 13). Children ages three to five can apply to the DEC directly, or through the public schools.

INTRODUCTION

The Developmental Evaluation Centers Program (DEC) consists of a statewide network of 18 regional centers with teams of professionals with specialties in pediatrics, social work, psychology, speech and language, hearing, physical/occupational therapy, special education, nursing and nutrition. These centers provide evaluations, case management and treatment services to children who have, or are suspected of having a developmental disability.

BENEFITS/ SERVICES

DECs provide the following services:

- Individual evaluations and diagnosis,
- Treatment and client instruction,
- Service coordination,
- Screening, and
- Technical assistance to other providers.

In addition, DECs can evaluate children under age five for eligibility under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Location

There are 18 DECs around the state. The following is a listing of the DECs and the counties that they cover:

DEC	Counties Covered
Cullowhee	Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Swain
Asheville	Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Transylvania
Boone	Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, Yancey
Morganton	Alexander, Burke, Catawba, Caldwell, McDowell
Shelby	Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Polk, Rutherford
Charlotte	Mecklenburg
Concord	Cabarrus, Iredell, Rowan, Stanly, Union
Wadesboro	Anson, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Scotland
Winston-Salem	Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, Yadkin
Greensboro	Alamance, Caswell, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham
Durham	Durham, Franklin, Granville, Orange, Person, Vance, Warren
Raleigh	Chatham, Johnston, Lee, Wake
Fayetteville	Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Robeson, Sampson
Rocky Mount	Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Wilson, Northhampton
Greenville	Beaufort, Bertie, Greene, Hyde, Martin, Pitt, Wayne
New Bern	Carteret, Craven, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico
Wilmington	Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Pender
Elizabeth City	Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, Washington

APPLICATIONS

There is a statewide “child find” system to identify children who have or may be at risk of having developmental disabilities. Outreach is conducted through physician offices, health departments and schools. Referrals may be made by physicians, schools, mental health agencies, health departments or other providers.

Birth to Age Three

Children birth up to age three can apply to the DEC’s directly, or to the interagency coordinating councils responsible for the IDEA program. Simple application forms are available and generally processed within 15 days.

Children Three to Five

Applications for older children can be taken at the DEC’s or through the public schools. The review process may take up to 30 days.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Children who are NC residents and in families with an annual gross income under 100% of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible for free services at the DEC’s. There is no charge for evaluations for children, regardless of family income, who are enrolled in the Infant-Toddler Program (birth through two years of age) and the Preschool Program (three through five years of age). Children from families with higher incomes are eligible for services on a sliding fee scale. No child is denied services due to an inability to pay. There are no verification requirements for this program.

INFORMATION

NC Department of Health and Human Services
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Raleigh, NC 27626-0597
919-733-7437

Children's Special Health Services Helpline: 1-800-737-3028

CARELINE: 1-800-662-7030