

Louisiana Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2026 – Jared Peters of Walker, Louisiana, received the 2026 Yes I Can Award for Advocacy from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Jared will be honored this March along with other Yes I Can recipients at the CEC Convention and Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Yes I Can Awards celebrate and honor the achievements of children and youth with exceptionalities while increasing public awareness of the abilities and aspirations of students with disabilities.

Jared is on the autism spectrum and lives with sensory processing disorder. He has not only overcome personal challenges, but he has also become a voice for himself and others. From an early age, Jared has been passionate about learning, including reading by age two and demonstrating remarkable memory and analytical skills. Along his academic journey, he navigated challenges related to diagnosed differences that affected sensory and social communication expectations. Through determination and growth, Jared developed strong self-regulation, emotional awareness, and coping skills that laid the foundation for his success.

Today, Jared is thriving academically, socially, and emotionally. He is fully engaged in the classroom, builds meaningful friendships, and interacts with educators and peers with responsibility and respect. Known for his strong interpersonal communication, Jared confidently advocates for his needs when appropriate, allowing him to remain focused on learning while contributing positively to his school community.

Jared is a thoughtful, respectful, and active participant in his IEP meetings and communicates openly with teachers, helping foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment. “Jared’s growth in self-awareness and communication has empowered him to take charge of his learning,” shares his nominator. “He has become more independent, confident, and resilient. His sincerity, honesty, and unique perspective make him an outstanding and inspiring individual.”

Jared and his family would like to acknowledge and thank the amazing and dedicated educators, administrators, paras, and professionals from: Livingston Parish Public Schools- North Live Oak Elementary, Live Oak Middle, Livingston Virtual, and Live Oak High School; The Emerge Center of Baton Rouge; and Launch Therapy Center of Denham Springs. These incredible individuals worked diligently to create environments of “possible,” which encouraged him at every step, regardless of the obstacle. They recognized the gifts in Jared, stopping at nothing to help him achieve success every day in moving mountains. Without them, this honor would not be possible.

Thank you to Einstein Advocates for sponsoring the Yes I Can Awards.

For Immediate Release

Contact: *Annie Drinkard*

703-264-9455

adrinkard@exceptionalchildren.org

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to high-quality education that is inclusive and equitable for individuals with disabilities. Learn more about CEC at <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>.

