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## CHILD FIND

Each State must have policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities, birth through age 21, residing in the State and who are in need of special education and related services, or early intervention services are identified, located, and evaluated. 34 C.F.R. § 300.111 – Child Find. The Child Find system contains three components leading to the determination of whether or not a student has a disability and requires special education. The components are locating, identifying, and evaluating. This document describes locating and identifying activities.

## LEA Responsibility

The Local Education Agency (LEA) is responsible for establishing and implementing an ongoing Child Find system to locate, identify, and evaluate students suspected of having a disability, age three through 21 years, who may need special education, regardless of the severity of the disability. The LEA is also responsible for coordinating with SoonerStart Early Intervention (EI) Program regarding the Child Find system. The Child Find system includes all students who reside within the LEA’s geographic boundaries including students who are:

1. Enrolled in public schools including, charter schools, virtual charter schools, and alternative schools;
2. Homeschooled;
3. Enrolled in private elementary and secondary schools (including religious schools) located in the LEA; including out-of-state parentally-placed private school students with disabilities even if the students are not residents of the LEA;
4. Enrolled in educational programs in correctional facilities located in the LEA;
5. Enrolled in Head Start;
6. Enrolled in State Institutions;
7. Enrolled in other child care or treatment facilities;



8. Not enrolled in elementary or secondary school, including children ages 3 through 5;
9. Highly mobile students, such as migrant and homeless as defined by the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act; and
10. Wards of the State.

## Section 2. Locating Students

Locating students who may have disabilities involves coordinating with community partners and other agencies and promoting public awareness.

### A. Coordination with Other Community Partners

The LEA will maintain open and ongoing communication with local community partners and agencies who may naturally have interactions with families through the work they do within the community. These community partners can help point families to the LEA if they encounter a child who may have delays or a suspected disability. These community partners may include, daycares, churches, Head Starts, doctor's offices, Department of Human Services (DHS), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs, etc.

### B. Public Awareness

The LEA must take the necessary steps to ensure that LEA staff and the general public are informed of the following:

1. The availability of special education services;
2. A student's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE);
3. Confidentiality protections; and
4. The special education referral process, including screening and evaluation procedures.

This information may be provided through a variety of methods to include, but not limited to, distributing brochures or flyers throughout the community, including information in school or LEA publications, disseminating articles and announcements to newspapers, arranging for radio and television messages and appearances, speaking at faculty meetings or LEA professional developments, presentations, as well as electronic forms of communication. Regardless of the methods employed, LEAs must conduct comprehensive Child Find activities. In addition, during the timely and meaningful consultations throughout the school year with representatives from private schools and parents, LEAs are required to inform them of the LEA's Child Find procedures. See 34 C.F.R. § 300.134(a).

## Section 3. Identifying Students

The identification component of Child Find may include screening or Support Team processes. However, general education interventions cannot delay the initial evaluation for special education services of a student suspected of having a disability. The procedural rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) apply and a copy of the procedural rights must be provided to the parent when the student is referred for a special education evaluation by the parent or the LEA. Child Find is a critical part of the special education process for all children suspected of having disabilities. IDEA requires that children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education are identified, located, and evaluated (34 C.F.R. § 300.111). IDEA does not require that a child receive scientific, research, or evidence-based interventions before being referred for consideration for eligibility for special education and related services. See 34 C.F.R. § 300.111.

### A. Screening

Screening is one way of identifying students who are not meeting or who may not be meeting Academic Standards. Screening is an informal but structured and organized process. A variety of methods may be used to screen students, including performance on assessments, curriculum-based measures, daily classroom work, observations, hearing and vision screeners, developmental milestones, and/or kindergarten readiness measures. The screening of a student by LEA staff to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation must not be considered an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services (34 C.F.R. § 300.302). Although screening is an important part of the Child Find system, screening cannot be used to delay processing a referral to consider a special education evaluation where immediate action is warranted. General education interventions cannot delay the initial evaluation for special education services of a student suspected of having a disability. The procedural rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) apply when the student is referred for a special education evaluation by the parent or the LEA as defined above

## Section 4. Special Education Referral for Evaluation

If through the Child Find process, a student is identified as possibly having a disability and needing special education services, parents or legal guardian will be asked for their written consent to evaluate the child. Child Find is not a passive process. LEAs should not wait for others to refer students for special education services. LEAs must seek out potentially IDEA eligible students. Special education referrals for evaluation may be made for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to academic and/or behavioral concerns.

### Additional Resources

[TNStateBoardof Education\\_ChildFindProcedures\\_Current\\_Accessible.pdf](#)  
[Child Find Powerpoint](#)



October, 2023