



Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
Child Find

**Technical
Assistance
Bulletin
6**

June 2001

<p>1. What is Child Find?</p>	<p>Child Find is an ongoing process through which all children with disabilities, from birth through 21 years of age, in the State who are eligible for early intervention or in need of special education services are identified, located and evaluated. The Child Find process is mandated in Parts B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and in the State regulations that govern Maryland's early intervention and special education systems. [34 CFR §§300.125; 300.451; 303.321; Education Article §8-401(b); State Plan IIIB(3); COMAR 13A.05.01.01-.02; 13A.13.01.05]</p>
<p>2. What are the responsibilities of public agencies under federal and State Child Find requirements?</p>	<p>Part C of IDEA governs Child Find activities for children between the ages of birth to three years. The Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is responsible for coordinating with all other major efforts to locate and identify infants and toddlers with disabilities conducted by other public agencies responsible for administering the various health, education, and social services programs for young children and their families. Local lead agencies, with the support of MSDE and other State agencies, are responsible for coordinating a comprehensive child find system within the local jurisdiction to ensure that all children, birth to three years of age, who are eligible for early intervention services are identified, located, and evaluated.</p> <p>Child Find for preschool children, ages three through five, is governed by Part B of IDEA. The State and local school systems conduct the same child find activities for preschool children as they do for school age students, ages six through 21 years. Part B of IDEA also requires local school systems to conduct Child Find activities for children, residing in their jurisdiction, including students enrolled in private schools, including religiously affiliated schools, who may be in need of special education and related services. [34 CFR §§300.125; 300.220; 300.451; 303.321; Education Article §8-401(b); State Plan IIIB(3); COMAR 13A.05.01.01-.02; 13A.13.01.05]</p>

<p>3. How do local lead agencies and local school systems inform the public of the availability of early intervention special education services?</p>	<p>Local lead agencies must develop and implement an annual public awareness plan that documents ongoing efforts to inform the public about the local early intervention system, including how to contact the Single Point of Entry to make a referral and the availability of early intervention services.</p> <p>At least annually, local school systems must publicize information about screening, referral, and other services, including the address, telephone number, and the title of the local school system's Child Find contact person. Publicity should utilize one print medium and at least one other medium that provides access to the jurisdiction.</p> <p>Local lead agencies and local school systems may use a wide range of public awareness activities to publicize the availability of early intervention and special education services. Examples of these activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of public awareness materials to hospitals, physicians, child care centers, private schools, and community organizations; • Public service announcements on radio and television; • Exhibits at health fairs and other community activities; • Presentations at PTA meetings and family support group meetings; • Meetings with community leaders representing traditionally underserved and minority populations; • Establishing liaisons with private school administrators; and • Including referral information on local web-sites. <p>[34 CFR §§300.125; 300.451; 303.321; Education Article §8-401(b); State Plan IIIB(3); COMAR 13A.05.01.01-.02; 13A.13.01.04-.05]</p>
--	--

<p>4. How does an individual make a referral for a child?</p>	<p>For children birth to three years of age, an individual should contact the local early intervention system's Single Point of Entry in the jurisdiction in which the child resides. Information needed to make a referral includes the child's name, gender, date of birth, parent(s) or primary caregiver's name(s), address, telephone number, and the reason for referral.</p> <p>For children and youth, ages three through 21, an individual must make a written referral to the student's local school Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. The written referral is the documentation of the individual's reason for the referral. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date of the referral; • Student's name, gender, date of birth; and grade; • Name of the school or childcare center the student attends, if applicable; • Parent(s) or primary caregiver's name(s), address, and telephone number; and
--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of the individual making the referral, address, and telephone number where they may be contacted, if different than the parent(s) or primary caregiver(s). <p>Additional information regarding instructional issues or concerns relevant to the reason for referral is useful, but not required.</p> <p>[State Plan IIIB(3)]</p>
--	---

<p>5. What are the responsibilities of local lead agencies and local school systems after a referral is made for a child?</p>	<p>For infants and toddlers, birth to age three, within 45 days of receiving a referral at the local Single Point of Entry, the local early intervention system must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign an interim service coordinator to assist the family during the evaluation and assessment of the child and the identification of the family's resources, concerns, and priorities related to the development of the child; Determine if the child is eligible for early intervention services under IDEA, using existing information from the family and other sources, as well as results from evaluation and assessment; and If the child is eligible, develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), based on the developmental needs of the child and the resources, concerns, and priorities of the family. <p>For students, ages three through 21, upon receiving a written referral, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must assess and evaluate a student within 90 days of the date of the written referral, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with the student's parents and other professionals to review existing data; Reviewing information and concerns provided by the parents; Determining whether there is a need for additional data prior to determining if the student is a student with a disability under IDEA; and Developing an IEP for the student within 30 days of the evaluation if the IEP team determines the student is a student with a disability. <p>[34 CFR §§303.321; 300.7; 300.346; 300.533; COMAR 13A.05.01.04-.06; 13A.13.01.06 and .08]</p>
--	--

<p>6. Must Child Find include students with disabilities attending private schools?</p>	<p>Yes. Each local educational agency must conduct comparable Child Find activities for children residing in the jurisdiction enrolled in public and private schools, including religiously affiliated schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, who may be in need of special education and related services. Each local school system must consult with the appropriate representatives of private school children with disabilities about how to implement Child Find activities within their system.</p> <p>[34 CFR §§300.125; 300.220; 300.451; Education Article §8-401(b); State Plan IIIIB(3)]</p>
<p>7. May public agencies restrict Child Find activities to specific disabilities or private schools?</p>	<p>No. In conducting Child Find activities for all students residing in the jurisdiction, a local school system must identify and evaluate all students suspected of having a disability that requires the provision of special education services, regardless of whether these students are parentally-placed in a private or religiously affiliated school.</p> <p>[34 CFR §§300.125;300.450-300.451]</p>
<p>8. Which public agency is responsible for conducting Child Find when a student between the ages of three to 21 years old is placed in a private school outside their jurisdiction of residence?</p>	<p>In accordance with Maryland State law, students are considered to reside in the home of their parents even if they do not physically live there, or attend a private school located within the jurisdiction of another public agency. This would mean that the public agency in which the student's parents reside would be responsible for Child Find as well as ensuring that required reevaluations are conducted. A public agency has flexibility as to how it ensures these responsibilities are met. For example, it may assume the responsibility itself, contract with another public agency, or make other arrangements. If a public agency identifies a student with a disability, who is not a resident of its jurisdiction, the public agency must notify the public agency in the jurisdiction in which the student's parents reside. The public agency in which the student's parent's reside is responsible for including the student in the count of eligible parentally-placed private school students with disabilities regardless of whether the students has been designated to receive services from that public agency.</p> <p>[34 CFR §§300.125; 300.453-300.454; Education Article §8-401(b); State Plan IIIIB(3)]</p>

<p>9. May funds set-aside for services to private school students be used for Child Find?</p>	<p>No. The obligation to conduct Child Find within a jurisdiction exist independently. The cost of Child Find activities in private or religiously affiliated schools may not be considered in determining whether a local school system has met its obligation in providing services to students with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools.</p> <p>[20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(3); 1412(a)(10)(A); 34 CFR §§300.125; 300.451; 300.453]</p>
--	--

For more information, call 410-767-0858

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION *Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools
 * Carol Ann Baglin, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services*
 200 West Baltimore Street * Baltimore, MD 21201