

## CHILD FIND

The purpose of this document is to outline how RSU No. 5 fulfills the Federal and State requirements to ensure that all children with disabilities in its jurisdiction receive the proper care under the Child Find requirements.

The Child Find requirements in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B require States to have policies and procedures in effect to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the State who need special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated, regardless of the severity of the disability. An effective Child Find system is an ongoing part of RSU No. 5's responsibility to ensure that a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is made available to all eligible children with disabilities.

According to State law, RSU No.5 shall also implement Child Find procedures for children who are experiencing homelessness or are wards of the State, highly mobile and migrant children, Multilingual learners, and parentally-placed private school children with disabilities, as well as those suspected of having developmental delays as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b). Child Find also includes children who have complex medical needs and who reside in nursing homes because of serious health problems and those who are in correctional facilities. 34 C.F.R. § 300.111(b)-(c). This requirement includes identification of children who are suspected of having a disability, including for example, children suspected of having long COVID or suspected of having post-COVID conditions that meet the definition of a disability under IDEA.

Child Find responsibilities include locating all children who may be in need of special education services, and determining through the evaluation and eligibility process if they require services. This responsibility shall be accomplished through a district-wide process which, while not a definitive or final judgment of a student's capabilities or disability, is a possible indicator of special education needs.

IDEA's Child Find requirements permit referrals from sources who believe a child may be eligible for special education and related services. Sources include, but are not limited to, a parent, teacher, health care provider, law enforcement, or other individuals with knowledge about the child. However, consistent with the child find requirements and with the parental consent requirements under IDEA and the implementing regulations, only the child's parent or the child's Local Educational Agency (LEA) may initiate the request for an initial evaluation LEA. 34 C.F.R. § 300.301(b).

Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and eligibility determination by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team.

RSU No. 5 shall implement the Child Find process during the first 30 days of the school year or during the first 30 days of enrollment for transfer children, in addition to other Child Find activities provided by the school unit.

This Child Find process shall include obtaining data on each child through multiple measures, direct assessment, and parent information regarding the child's academic and functional performance, gross and fine motor skills, receptive and expressive language skills, vision, hearing and cognitive skills. RSU No. 5 may schedule Child Find activities during its annual kindergarten enrollment to assist in planning for necessary special education and related services at the start of the school year. If screening

occurs in the spring prior to school entry, RSU No. 5 will refer the child to the regional Child Development Services (CDS) site within 10 school days.

If the Child Find process indicates that a student may require special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education, the student shall be referred to the IEP Team to determine the student's eligibility for special education services.

School staff, parents, or agency representatives or other individuals with knowledge of the child may refer children to the IEP team if they believe that the student, because of a disability, may be in need of special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education. Such a referral should follow the school unit's pre-referral and referral policy.

Legal References:     34 C.F.R. § 300.111 (2006)  
                              34 C.F.R. § 300.301(b).  
                              ME. Dept. of Educ. Rule Ch. 101, IV 2(A), (C) (2015)  
                              Me Dept. of Educ. Administrative Letter 1 (January 21, 2021)  
                              Long COVID under Section 504 and the IDEA: A Resource to  
                              Support Children, Students, Educators, Schools, Service Providers, and  
                              Families (Jul. 26, 2021).

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