

CHILD FIND FACT SHEET

[Translated versions available here](#)

Introduction

This Fact Sheet provides a brief overview of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B and state law Child Find requirements applicable to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in Massachusetts and provides resources to support LEAs in ensuring children with disabilities are appropriately identified, located, and evaluated. In Massachusetts, LEAs must conduct child find activities for all children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 residing in or attending private school in the geographic boundaries of the LEA.

Overview of Federal Child Find Requirements Under IDEA Part B

All children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are in foster care, homeless, homeschooled, or attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, must be identified, located, and evaluated. Child find must include children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education, even if they are advancing from grade to grade. For more information about federal child find requirements, please see the United States Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), [Return to School Roadmap: Child Find Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (Aug. 24, 2021)(Child Find guidance).

IDEA Part B also requires each LEA to “locate, identify, and evaluate all children with disabilities who are *enrolled* by their parents in private, including religious, elementary schools and secondary schools located in the school district served by the LEA.” In accordance with IDEA regulations, the child find activities for such children must be similar to the child find activities undertaken for the LEA’s public school children. For more information about child find requirements relating to privately enrolled children with disabilities, including homeschooled students, please see the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE) [website](#), which includes [Administrative Advisory SPED 2018-1](#) and [sample child find notices](#) for privately enrolled students.

Overview of Child Find Requirements Under State Law

In addition to federal law, Massachusetts state law requires “the school committee of every city, town or school district” to “identify the [school age children](#) *residing therein* who have a disability,” as well as “diagnose and evaluate the needs of such children, propose a special education program to meet those needs, provide or arrange for the provision of such special education program.” State law also requires that school districts “maintain a record of such identification, diagnosis, proposal and program actually provided.”

Considerations for Conducting Child Find Activities

As described by OSERS in its [Child Find guidance](#), in light of the educational disruptions caused by COVID-19, LEAs should reexamine the efficacy of their existing child find practices and initiate new activities as appropriate. For example, the LEAs that post their Child Find notices on their websites and in settings frequented by families in their community, such as doctor’s offices, autism centers, hospitals, private schools, and day cares, may also consider posting their Child Find notices on their social media pages or expanding the number of settings in which they post them. For additional ideas for child find activities, please see: Q&A 5, OSERS, [Child Find](#).