

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL (CHILD FIND)

Identification – The purpose of child find is to locate, evaluate, and identify children with suspected disabilities in need of special education services, including those who are not currently receiving special education and related services and who may be eligible for those services. Activities are to reach:

- Children residing in the school district boundaries including preschool-aged children and children from birth to three in conjunction with South Sound Parent to Parent.
- Children attending private elementary and secondary schools located within the district boundaries;
- Highly mobile children (such as homeless, foster care, and migrant children);
- Children who have a disability and may need special education services even though they are advancing from grade to grade; and
- Children at home or home schooled.

The district will consult with parents and representatives of private school students to ensure its child find activities are comparable to private schools located within district boundaries. These consultations will occur through an annual meeting.

Referrals for private school students are made to the Director of Special Services or designee and the case is then assigned to a case manager.

The district reaches children who may be eligible for special education services through:

- Notification to parents of child find activities in its annual informational packet;
- Notification to parents district-wide through local papers or other media;
- Information regarding child find on the district's web site;
- Notification to private schools located in the district's boundaries.
- District informational mailings;
- Posting notices regarding screening and referral in school buildings and public locations including community preschool sites and physicians' offices;
- Notifying and coordinating with the designated Part C lead agencies;
- Early childhood screenings conducted by the district;
- Coordination with other public and private agencies and practitioners;
- Written information provided to district staff on referral procedures;
- Training teachers and administrators on referral/evaluation/identification procedures;
- Review of student behavior, discipline and absentee information and information gathered from district-wide assessment activities.

When district staff members have concerns that a student may have a suspected disability which could result in eligibility for special education services, they will notify special education staff or department.

The district's special education department conducts early childhood developmental screenings for ages birth to five. When parents or others inquire about screenings, the caller will be referred to the district's special education department.

The screening process involves the following:

- Parents are asked to provide information to assist in assessing their child; and
- Children are screened to assess cognitive, communication, physical, social-emotional and adaptive development as deemed appropriate.

Parents will be notified at the screening of the results and the parents will also be provided written notice of the results within 10 days of screening. If the screening supports evaluation, obtain written consent for evaluation at the exit interview if possible, or include consent forms with the written notice notifying the parents of the results. If the screening results indicate that the child does not need an evaluation, written notice shall be sent to the parents within a reasonable amount of time. Evaluation occurs in accordance with evaluation procedures.

Referral

A student whether or not enrolled in school, may be referred for a special education evaluation by parents, district staff, a public agency, or other persons knowledgeable about the student. Each building principal will designate a person responsible for ensuring that building staff understands the referral process. Referrals are required to be in writing unless the person referring is unable to write. A person who makes a referral orally should be asked to either make the referral in writing or go to the main office of the building for assistance in making the referral.

When a referral is made, the district must act within a 25 school-day timelines to make a decision about whether or not the student will receive an evaluation for eligibility for special education services. Follow the standard evaluation procedures as indicated in that section of this manual.

Eligibility – Part C: Students turning three, who were previously determined eligible for early intervention services under Part C of IDEA, must be evaluated for initial eligibility for special education services. The evaluation and initial IEP must be completed by a student's 3rd birthday.