



## Child Find Referral Process

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## Purpose

The purpose of the Child Find Referral Process is to ensure that Cedar Springs Public Schools identifies, locates, and evaluates all children with suspected disabilities who reside within Cedar Springs Public Schools boundaries and may require special education programs and services.

Child Find is a legal requirement under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** and the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE). School districts must implement procedures to locate and evaluate children with disabilities from **birth through age 25** who may be eligible for services.

This obligation applies regardless of the severity of disability or the child's educational setting.

## Scope

The Cedar Springs Public School's Child Find responsibilities apply to children and youth who:

- Reside within district boundaries
- Enrolled in and attend Cedar Springs Public Schools
- Attend private or parochial schools located within Cedar Springs Public School's district boundaries
- Are homeschooled
- Are enrolled in charter or virtual schools within Cedar Springs Public School's district boundaries
- Are wards of the state or in foster care
- Are highly mobile (migrant or homeless)
- Are in correctional facilities or child-caring institutions
- Have dropped out but are under age 26

## Public Awareness and Outreach

Cedar Springs Public Schools will maintain ongoing Child Find activities to inform the community about special education services and the referral process.

### Public Awareness Activities

Cedar Springs Public Schools will:

- Publish annual Child Find notices on the Cedar Springs Public Schools website
- Include information in parent/student handbooks
- Distribute brochures to community agencies
- Conduct outreach to:
  - Physicians and hospitals
  - Childcare providers
  - Early childhood centers
  - Mental health providers
  - Local social service agencies
- Collaborate with Kent Intermediate School District (Kent ISD) programs

Child Find outreach activities are designed to locate children as early as possible who may need early intervention or special education services.



## Referral Sources

A referral for a suspected disability may be initiated by any individual with knowledge or concerns about a child's development or educational performance.

### Individuals Who May Make Referrals

Referrals may be made by:

- Parents or guardians
- Teachers
- School administrators
- School psychologists
- School social workers
- School counselors
- Physicians or medical professionals
- Childcare providers
- Community agencies
- Private school staff

Parents may request an evaluation **verbally or in writing**, and Cedar Springs Public Schools must assist parents in documenting the request if necessary.

## Referral Procedures

### Step 1: Identification of Concern

Concerns may arise regarding a student's:

- Academic performance
- Behavior
- Social/emotional development
- Speech and language development
- Physical or motor development
- Cognitive functioning
- Hearing or vision
- Adaptive functioning

Concerns may be identified through:

- Classroom observations
- Universal screening
- Progress monitoring data
- Parent concerns
- Medical or developmental information

### Step 2: Pre-Referral Interventions

Cedar Springs Public Schools may implement support through a **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** or Student Support Teams (SSTs).

Possible interventions may include:

- Academic interventions



- Behavioral supports
- Progress monitoring
- Small group instruction
- Consultation with specialists

However, these interventions **cannot delay or deny a referral for a special education evaluation** if a disability is suspected.

### **Step 3: Submission of Referral**

A referral for a special education evaluation may be submitted to the Cedar Springs Public School's special education office or building administrator.

#### **Referral Documentation**

The referral must include:

- Student demographic information
- Description of concerns
- Educational history
- Documentation of interventions (if applicable)
- Relevant evaluation or medical information
- Parent input

### **Step 4: District Review of Referral**

Cedar Springs Public Schools will review the referral and existing data to determine whether there is sufficient reason to suspect a disability.

The review may include:

- Academic records
- Progress monitoring data
- Attendance records
- Behavior records
- Parent information
- Previous evaluations

### **Prior Written Notice (PWN)**

Within **10 school days of receiving the referral**, Cedar Springs Public Schools must provide parents with **Prior Written Notice (PWN)** describing the action proposed or refused regarding the evaluation request.

The notice must include:

- The proposed or refused action
- Explanation of the decision
- Evaluation data considered
- Other options considered
- Reasons for rejection of options
- Parent rights and procedural safeguards
- Resources for assistance



## Parental Consent for Evaluation

If Cedar Springs Public Schools proposes an evaluation:

1. Cedar Springs Public Schools will provide written notice.
2. Cedar Springs Public Schools will request **written informed parental consent**.

**The evaluation process cannot begin until parental consent is obtained.**

## Initial Evaluation Timeline

After receiving written parental consent:

- Cedar Springs Public Schools must complete the evaluation.
- An eligibility meeting must occur within **30 school days**.

## Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET)

Evaluations are conducted by a **Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET)** consisting of qualified professionals knowledgeable about the suspected disability.

Team members may include:

- School psychologist
- Special education teacher consultant
- Speech-language pathologist
- School social worker
- Occupational therapist
- Physical therapist
- General education teacher
- Administrator
- Parent/guardian

The MET will:

- Review existing data
- Conduct additional assessments
- Provide a recommendation of eligibility for any suspected disabilities under MARSE

## Eligibility Determination

The IEP team, including the parent, will meet to review the Eligibility Recommendation and determine whether the student:

1. Meets criteria for a disability under MARSE.
2. Requires special education programs and/or related services.

If eligible:

- An **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** will be developed.

If not eligible:

- Cedar Springs Public Schools will provide written documentation explaining the decision and may recommend general education support.



## Special Populations

Child Find procedures apply to children who are:

- Parentally placed in private schools
- Homeschooled
- Migrant or homeless
- In correctional facilities
- Enrolled in alternative programs
- Receiving hospital or homebound instruction

Cedar Springs Public Schools must ensure equitable evaluation opportunities for these populations.

## Early Childhood Child Find (Birth–Age 5)

### Birth–Age 3

Children may be referred to **Early On Michigan**, the statewide early intervention program.

### Ages 3–5

Cedar Springs Public Schools coordinates any early childhood evaluation for preschool children for early childhood special education services.

## Confidentiality

All records related to Child Find referrals and evaluations are protected under:

- **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**
- IDEA confidentiality provisions

Cedar Springs Public Schools will ensure:

- Secure storage of records
- Parent access to records
- Appropriate consent for information sharing

## Documentation Requirements

Cedar Springs Public Schools must maintain documentation of:

- Child Find public awareness activities
- Referral records
- Prior Written Notices
- Parent consent forms
- Evaluation reports
- Eligibility determinations

These records demonstrate compliance with federal and state regulations.

## Annual Review of Procedures

Cedar Springs Public Schools will review Child Find procedures annually to ensure compliance with:

- IDEA
- Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE)
- Michigan Department of Education guidance

### **Implementation Responsibility:**

The Director of Special Education or designee is responsible for implementing and monitoring the Cedar Springs Public School's Child Find procedures.