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Questions and Answers about Child Find

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA '04) and the Arizona Administrative Code (AAC) define child find requirements to ensure eligible infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children have access to early intervention or special education and related services.

Responsibilities

1. What is a public education agency's (PEA) "child find" responsibility?

PEAs are required to establish, implement, and disseminate to their school-based personnel and all parents within the PEA's boundaries of responsibility written procedures for the identification and referral of all children with disabilities aged birth through 21, regardless of the severity of their disability.

2. What additional child find activities are the responsibilities of a unified school district, elementary school district, or union high school district?

PEAs will identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities within their geographic boundaries of responsibility who are in need of special education and related services, including children who are highly mobile, such as migrant or homeless students, wards of the state, private school and homeschool students, regardless of the severity of their disability, and students who are suspected of being children with a disability and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade. For infants and toddlers aged birth to 2 years 10 ½ months, PEAs should use the referral form located on the AZ FIND website to refer the child to the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP).

3. What child find activities are the responsibilities of charter schools?

For a school-aged child (grades K through 12), the charter school in which the student is enrolled is accountable for child find activities. It is the school's responsibility to identify and evaluate students with disabilities, including children who are suspected of being children with a disability and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade. For infants and toddlers aged birth to 2 years 10 ½ months, the charter school should refer the child to AzEIP. For a child aged 2 years 10 ½ months to 5 years, the charter school should refer the child to the child's district of residence. The referral form is located on the AZ FIND website.

4. What is the PEA's obligation for students transferring from another PEA?

The PEA shall review enrollment data and educational performance in the prior PEA. If there is a history of special education for a student not currently eligible for special education or of poor progress, the name of the student shall be submitted to the administrator for consideration of the need for a referral for a full and individual evaluation or other services.

5. Who is responsible for child find activities for school-aged students who attend private schools?

The school district within whose boundaries the *non-profit* private school is located is responsible for child find activities. The school district responsible for child find activities for students placed by their parents in a *for-profit* private school is the district of residence.

6. Who is responsible for child find activities for preschool-aged children?

All preschool-aged children are referred to the unified or elementary school district of residence for child find services, including children who attend private preschools regardless of where the school is located. Union high school districts and charter schools should use the referral form located on the AZ FIND website to refer the child to the district of residence.

7. Who is responsible for child find activities for the student who is homeschooled?

The school district within whose boundaries the homeschooled student resides is responsible for child find activities.

8. Who is responsible for child find activities for students in secure care facilities?

Minor-aged students in secure care facilities are the responsibility of the secure care facility for all educational needs. Students who are the age of majority and attend an educational program in a secure facility are the responsibility of that secure care facility.

9. Does the PEA have to maintain documentation of child find activities?

Yes, the PEA is required to maintain documentation of identification procedures, dates of entry into school, or notification by parents of concerns regarding developmental or education progress by their child, and dates of screening in the student's permanent records.

10. Are PEAs required to document that all school-based staff have reviewed written child find procedures?

Yes. The PEA will require all school-based staff to annually review written procedures related to child identification and referral. The PEA must maintain documentation of staff review.

Screening

1. Who may refer a child for screening?

Anyone who has concerns about a child's development or academic achievement may refer the student for screening (i.e., parents, family members, or school staff).

2. What are the components of screening?

Screening procedures shall include vision and hearing status and consideration of the following areas: cognitive or academic, communication, motor, social or behavioral, and adaptive development. Screening may also include observations, family interviews, review of medical, developmental, or educational records, or the administration of an instrument identified by the test publisher as appropriate for use as a screening tool. Screening does not include detailed individualized comprehensive evaluation procedures.

3. What is the time frame for conducting screening for possible disabilities?

Screening shall be completed within 45 calendar days after entry into preschool, kindergarten, or for newly enrolled school-aged children without appropriate records of screening, evaluation, or progress in school. Screening is also required after receiving parent notification of a possible disability for children aged 3 through 21 years.

4. Does the PEA have to notify parents of a concern resulting from a screening?

Yes, the parents must be notified of any concern found during screening within 10 school days. Additionally, the PEA must include procedures they will utilize to follow up on the student's needs; consideration of screening results could lead to a full and individual evaluation or provision of other services.

References

1. IDEA '04, Parts B and C (34 C.F.R. §§ 300 et seq., 34 C.F.R. §§ 303 et seq.)
2. A.A.C. R7-2-401 (C)(D)
3. *Letter to Smith* (OSEP) December 1, 2006
4. *Letter to Chapman* (OSEP) August 22, 2007