



State of Arizona  
Department of Education

## Unorganized Territory Referral Procedures for Preschool-Aged Children Child Find and Early Intervention Transition (In-by-3)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA '04), the Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 15, Chapter 7, Article 4, and the Child Find Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the Arizona Department of Education define local education agency (LEA) child find requirements to identify, locate, and evaluate children with disabilities.

Arizona has unique geographical areas called unorganized territories. These regions are located outside the boundaries of any LEA. A school-aged child (in contrast to a preschool-aged child) who lives in an unorganized territory must seek either open enrollment in an adjacent school district or a certificate of educational convenience (CEC) from the county school superintendent's office (sometimes referred to as the county education service agency [ESA]). A CEC is issued by the ESA allowing the child to attend a school district adjacent to the unorganized territory (A.R.S. §15-825). A map of unorganized territories is located on the ADE website, [www.azed.gov/specialeducation/az-find](http://www.azed.gov/specialeducation/az-find). Child find activities occur after a school-aged child enrolls in the adjacent school district.

However, a preschool-aged child who resides in an unorganized territory and is suspected of having a disability must be found eligible to receive special education services before a CEC can be assigned and before the child can receive services. A child find referral is made in order to determine whether or not a preschool child is eligible for services.

The process for child find referral, determination of eligibility, and placement with a school district of a child who is between 2 years 10½ months and 5 years old who resides in an unorganized territory is as follows:

- 1. Referring Agency's Role:** A child find referral may be initiated by an LEA or the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP). When an agency is informed of a family's concern about their child's development, within two business days from the date of notification, a representative of the agency will begin the referral process following the instructions on the referral form. The Unorganized Territory Child Find Referral Form is located on the AZ FIND website: [www.azed.gov/specialeducation/az-find](http://www.azed.gov/specialeducation/az-find) and is found under the Public Education Agency Resources. The agency will fax or email the referral form to the AZ FIND coordinator. Note: A parent may also initiate a referral by calling the ADE AZ FIND coordinator.
- 2. ADE AZ FIND Coordinator's Role:** Within one business day of receiving the referral, the ADE AZ FIND coordinator will contact the appropriate ESA office to determine which school district the child would attend should a CEC be assigned (provided the child is eligible for special education services). The coordinator will then contact the school district to initiate the referral.
- 3. School District's Role:** The assigned school district will conduct the child find screening within 45 calendar days from the date of notification by the ADE AZ FIND coordinator, and if necessary, the school district will obtain parental consent for evaluation and then determine special education eligibility within 60 calendar days.



In order to ensure that a preschool child receives services in a preschool program by the time the child is 3 years old, there is also a process for early intervention transition for a child between the ages of 2 years 6 months and 2 years 9 months in unorganized territories. This process is as follows:

1. For a child transitioning from AzEIP to preschool, early intervention transition procedures and timelines will be followed prior to the child's 3rd birthday.
2. Following a Transition Planning Meeting, the AzEIP service coordinator will call the AZ FIND coordinator to determine the LEA contact so that the Transition Conference can be scheduled for a child between the ages of 2 years 6 months and 2 years 9 months.
3. Within one to three business days, the AZ FIND coordinator will contact the county school superintendent's office to find out which school district the child will attend if a CEC is assigned (provided the child is eligible for special education services).

**Additional information regarding funding is as follows:**

1. The district that screens and evaluates the child will be reimbursed for the associated child find costs by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '04) Preschool Emergency Grant. The agency must create a budget and will be reimbursed by an initial payment; this will be followed by complete cash management reporting of expenditures and 30-day encumbrances for actual costs associated with child find screening and evaluations.
2. Once a child becomes part of a school district's enrollment through the CEC, the agency will receive average daily membership (ADM) funds, if applicable, through the child's special education eligibility category and also will receive funding through the IDEA Preschool Grant. Keep in mind, however, that the IDEA Preschool Grant allocations are computed on the prior year's child count. The grant is available for excess costs of providing special education.
3. Grant applications are available from the ADE Grants Management website: [www.azed.gov/grants-management](http://www.azed.gov/grants-management).
4. If a child resides in an unorganized territory and transportation is not provided by the attending school district, the county school superintendent's office may provide direct or contracted transportation services and the office would be eligible for mileage reimbursement from ADE for costs. Refer to the ADE School Finance Transportation Aid for Unorganized Territories memorandum 16-005: [www.azed.gov/Administrators/SF/NumberedMemos/FY2016/16-005.pdf](http://www.azed.gov/Administrators/SF/NumberedMemos/FY2016/16-005.pdf).

For more information, contact the ADE AZ FIND Coordinator at (928) 637-1871 or [AZFIND@azed.gov](mailto:AZFIND@azed.gov)

