



State of Arizona
Department of Education

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TO: School Superintendents
Special Education Directors
Preschool Coordinators
County School Superintendents
Arizona Early Intervention Program

FROM: Joan McDonald, Deputy Associate Superintendent
Exceptional Student Services

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Early Childhood Special Education

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Exceptional Student Services

RE: Child Find (2.10 to 5 year olds) and Early Intervention Transitions (In-By-3) Referral Procedures in Unorganized Territories

Arizona has unique geographical areas called unorganized territories. These regions are outside the boundaries of any local education agency (LEA) and school district property taxes are not levied. A school-aged child (vs a preschool-aged child) who lives in an unorganized territory must seek open enrollment 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 allows the child to attend any of the school districts adjacent to the unorganized territory. A.R.S. §.15-825.

A preschool-aged child who resides in an unorganized territory and is suspected to have a disability will need to be found eligible to receive special education services before a CEC can be assigned. The costs associated with the child find screening and evaluation process will be reimbursed by the state education agency (SEA)/Arizona Department of Education (ADE).

The process for referral for a child 2.10 ½ to 5 years old in unorganized territories is as follows:

1. A child find referral may be from a family, Head Start program, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school, FACE program, Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP), et. al. AzEIP will assist families with a child between age 2.10 ½ months and 5 years who live in unorganized territories to follow instructions in Step 2. It is difficult to identify the unorganized territories at this time; typically a service coordinator will find out in the course of locating the child's school district.

2. Within two business days from the date an agency (Head Start, BIE, FACE, et. al) receives a child find referral, the referral will be called into the ADE Child Find Coordinator (928) 679-8106). Families who express concern to AzEIP about their preschool-aged child's development will be assisted by staff within two business days from the date of contact to call the ADE Child Find Coordinator at (928) 679-8106. The Coordinator will within one business day will contact the appropriate 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).
3. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '04) and the Arizona Administrative Code (AAC), the LEA will conduct the child find screening within 45 calendar days from the date of referral (the phone call from the ADE Child Find Coordinator) and, if necessary, the LEA will obtain parental consent for evaluation and within 60 calendar days determine special education eligibility.

The process for early intervention transition for a child between the ages of 2.6 and 2.9 months in unorganized territories is as follows:

1. For a child transitioning from AzEIP to preschool, early intervention transition procedures and timelines will be followed in order that the IEP be written, or the child is determined ineligible, before his/her 3rd birthday.
2. Following a Transition Planning Meeting, the AzEIP Service Coordinator will call the ADE Child Find Coordinator to determine the LEA contact in order to schedule a Transition Conference between the child's age of 2.6 and 2.9 months. Within one to three business days, the ADE Child 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:

1. The school district will submit an IDEA Preschool Emergency Grant. Through this grant, the district will create a budget and will be reimbursed by an initial payment and then complete cash management reporting of expenditures and 30 day encumbrances for actual costs associated with child find screening and evaluations.
2. Once the child becomes part of the school district's enrollment through the CEC, the school district will receive average daily membership (ADM) funds (if applicable) through the child's special education eligibility category and the district receives funding through the IDEA Preschool Grant. Keep in mind the IDEA Preschool Grant allocations are computed on the prior year child count. The IDEA Preschool Emergency Grant is available for excess costs of providing special education and may be applied for on the grants management page.
3. 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 be eligible for mileage reimbursement from ADE for costs to provide direct, or contracted, transportation services. See School Finance memorandum 11-110:
www.azed.gov/Administrators/SF/NumberedMemos/FY2011/11-010.pdf.

For more information contact the ADE Child Find Coordinator: (928) 679-8106 or azfind@azed.gov.