

Child Find Procedures and Parentally-Placed Private School/Home-School Students

Child Find Definition and Procedures

The term "child find" refers to the obligation of the district, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, to ensure that all children between the ages of 3 and 21 are identified, located and evaluated.

The term includes early intervention services for children from birth to age three (these children are actually served by Babies Can't Wait (BCW) until they reach the age of three.) The Department for Exceptional Children regularly consults with BCW so that evaluations, eligibility and IEPs are developed for those children transitioning from BCW by or before the child's third birthday.

For students of ages 3-5 years, the department conducts regular screenings to identify those students who may require special education referrals/services. Screening to determine appropriate educational strategies is not to be considered evaluation.

The District and the department meet annually with private school representatives to inform them of the District's Child Find Procedures.

In addition, the department presents annual training/informational sessions for private school/home school representatives on the RTI process.

Child Find extends to current students in our district as well as pre-school children in private pre-schools and day-care centers; private school and home school students; migrant and homeless children; and other children living in our district who are suspected of having disabilities.

For children in kindergarten through 12th grade enrolled in public schools, Child Find is accomplished through the Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions. The Vidalia City School System has developed a Pyramid of Interventions to meet the academic and behavioral intervention needs of students. As interventions are purchased and implemented, revisions are made in the local Pyramid.

The Child Find process is facilitated by the locally-developed Pyramid of Interventions. All students in Vidalia City Schools participate in evidence-based instruction, which is developed based on grade level Georgia Performance Standards. When students struggle in the general education curriculum, Tier 2 and, if needed, Tier 3 interventions are provided. Data is collected at all tier levels to determine the students' responses to interventions that have been implemented. Students who do not make progress with the individual interventions provided at Tier 3 may be referred for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education and related services.

Tier 3 serves a Child Find responsibility for students who may need special education and related services. Students in private schools, home-schools, and charter schools who are referred for special education services should also have documentation of these prior interventions to assist in the determination of eligibility for special education services. Child Find is a critical part of the special education process for all children suspected of having disabilities. With the implementation of the Pyramid and the focus on progress monitoring and response to interventions, only those students who are not making progress, despite evidence-based instruction, will be referred to special education to determine their eligibility.

Exception allowed only when evaluation and/or placement is required due to a significant discrepancy.

Parentally-Placed Private/Home-School Child Find Procedures

The process for private school/home schooled students is the same as for public school students in that there should be an RTI/SST process and progress monitoring documentation that show attempts have been made to provide appropriate interventions and accommodations.

Parents or guardians of students with suspected disabilities can access the response to intervention (RTI) process at their home school or the school closest to the private school if the student resides outside the Vidalia City limits.

After the identification of such students, we develop an individualized service plan (ISP) for each disabled private school student, and spend a portion of our total proportionate share of federal funds on each such student for special education services. Home schooled children are considered in the same category as parentally placed private school students and are eligible for services under this provision of the law.

Parentally placed disabled children in private schools or home schooled disabled students are not entitled to a free appropriate public education; however, the district does offer, at its expense, speech services for identified students. Services may be provided at the student's public area school or at the public area school closest to the private school the student currently attends.

We invite the parents of any home-schooled or privately schooled student between the ages of three and twenty-one, suspected of having a disability, to contact our department at 912-537-3089 for further information on the Child Find initiative.