

CHILD FIND

Finding Children with Special Needs

- What is Child Find?

Child Find is a continuous process of public awareness activities, screening, and evaluation designed to locate, identify, and refer all young children with disabilities and their families who may be in need of early intervention programs or special education as early as possible. In Wisconsin, children from birth to 3 years of age may qualify for early intervention programs, which are operated by county Birth to 3 Programs. Children ages 3 to 21 may qualify for special education provided by local school districts.

- Why is Child Find necessary?

Screening all children provides parents and professionals with information on whether a child's development is similar to children of the same age. The purpose of Child Find for children ages 3-21 is to ensure that all children with disabilities have access to free, appropriate public education, including special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.

- Who is covered by Child Find?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires all states to have policies and procedures in effect to ensure that all children who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. Wisconsin Child Find applies to all children who reside within the State. This includes children who attend public and private schools or are home schooled, Head Start or Tribal Head Start, are highly mobile, migrant, homeless, and children who are wards of the State. Screenings and evaluations for special education and related services are free of charge to parents or legal guardians.

- Who makes a Child Find referral?

Anyone can make a request (called a referral). Children from birth to 3 should be referred to local county Birth to 3 Programs. A physician, nurse, psychologist, social worker, or administrator of a social agency who reasonably believes a child brought to hi or her for services is a child with a disability has a legal duty to refer the child, including a homeless child, to the school district in which the child resides. Before referring the child, the person making the referral must inform the child's parent that the referral will be made. Others, including parents, who reasonably believe a child is a child with a disability may also refer the child, including a homeless child, to the school district in which the child resides.

- What happens after a request/referral is made?

When the district receives a referral, the district will appoint an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to determine if the child has a disability, and if the child needs special education services. The district locates, identifies, and evaluated all children with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in private (including religious) schools, elementary school and secondary schools located in the school district.

- How does one make a referral?

Referrals must be in writing and include the reason why the person believes the child is a child with a disability. A referral may be made by contacting Rebecca Hanestad, Director of Special Education, Boyceville Community School District, at 715-643-3647 ext. 120, or by writing her at 1003 Tiffany St. Boyceville, WI 54725.

- If a child is under the age of three, who can I contact?

There are other agencies that can be contact with children under the age of three (3):

Dunn County Family and Children's Services: 715-232-1116

Barron County Birth-3-Early Intervention Program: 715-537-5691

St. Croix County Birth to 3 Program: 715-246-8248