

Date: 4/6/2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors of Special Education  
Early Childhood Special Education Directors  
Child Find Coordinators

FROM: Lynn Burgett, Division Supervisor, Early Childhood  
Mark Shudel, Division Administrator, Special Education

SUBJECT: Local Education Agency Birth to Three Child Find Responsibilities and  
Reporting Child Find Screening

The purpose of this memo is to clarify and reinforce the responsibilities of the Local Education Agencies (LEA) with regard to Child Find for children aged birth to three years old and reporting Child Find Screening activities for children aged birth to five years old. The Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) have joint responsibility for Child Find for this age group. LEAs are major stakeholders in Child Find for infants and toddlers with disabilities as the LEA will ultimately be responsible for educating these children. LEA responsibilities include public awareness, screenings, acting as a primary referral source and Local Interagency Council (LIC) membership.

**Regulations:**

The Federal Child Find regulations at 34 CFR 300.111 state, "The State must have in effect policies and procedures to ensure that – (i) All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated..."

The State Child Find regulations at 23 IL Adm Code 226.100 state, "a) Each school district shall be responsible for actively seeking out and identifying all children from birth through age 21 within the district (and those parentally-placed private school children for whom the district is responsible under 34 CFR 300.131) who may be eligible for special education and related services. Procedures developed to fulfill the child find responsibility shall include: 1) An annual screening of children under the age of 5 for the purpose of identifying those who may need early intervention or special education and related services...."

**Public Awareness:**

LEAs must conduct public awareness activities targeting families and other primary referral sources. Public awareness activities are ongoing and involve the major organizations that have a direct interest in young children including public and private agencies, parent groups, advocates, and other organizations. Public awareness should be broad enough to reach the general public and include a variety of methods. Examples of methods to inform the general public can include posters, pamphlets, displays, toll free-numbers, websites, videos, TV, radio, newspaper releases, advertisements etc.

ISBE funds the Child Find Project, a public awareness project that publishes and distributes public awareness materials. Visit the Child Find Project at <http://www.childfind-idea-il.us/> to view and order materials.

### **Screenings:**

The LEA has responsibility for identifying all children ages birth through twenty-one who may be eligible for early intervention or special education and related services. In addition to the annual screening, LEAs must have on-going screening procedures (including conducting or arranging for screening for infants and toddlers) in place for children who may have a disability and are identified at any time of the year, not only at the annual screening. In other words, LEAs should not delay screening a child because that child has missed the scheduled screening date.

In order to ensure that all children under the age of five are screened annually for the purpose of identifying those who may need early intervention or special education and related services, each LEA should provide for regular screening opportunities in their local service area. Screenings should be held as necessary to ensure that all children and families can access them. In addition, LEAs should collaborate with all other entities that support Child Find including early childhood programs and health care providers.

### **Primary Referral Source:**

LEAs serve as primary referral sources, along with hospitals, physicians, child care programs, public health facilities, social services agencies, other clinics and health care providers, public agencies and staff in the child welfare system (including child protective service and foster care), homeless family shelters, and domestic violence shelters and agencies. As a primary referral source, the LEA is responsible for referring infants and toddlers who have been identified as possibly being eligible for early intervention services to the local Child and Family Connections (CFC) office within five days.

### **Local Interagency Council Membership:**

Coordination of community Child Find and public awareness activities for infants and toddlers is the responsibility of the LIC under the CFC office. LEAs must serve as members of the LIC and actively participate in this coordination effort.

### **Child Find Screening Data Collection Form**

ISBE operates the Child Find Project, funded through IDEA Part B, Preschool Discretionary funds to develop and disseminate public awareness materials to LEAs, Special Education Cooperatives, and the CFC offices. Besides creation and distribution of materials, the Child Find Project also collects data on the number and location of developmental screenings taking place across the State of Illinois for children between birth and five years of age using the 0-5 Child Find Screening, Reporting and Data Collection Form (the "Form").

Each CFC office sends screening data to the Child Find Project monthly. As your program administers developmental screenings, you should report screening data to the CFC using the Form. This applies to developmental screenings only and not to other types of screenings, such as those for vision or hearing. Agencies are required to complete each section of the Form. The 0-5 Child Find Screening Data Collection Form and Direction Document can be found at <http://www.childfind-idea-il.us/Screening.aspx>.

Fax or e-mail completed forms to the local CFC office, attention LIC Coordinator. To ensure proper reports of the Child Find Project, the completed reports must be sent within one month of the screening event. The LEA may send multiple reports at once as

long as the reports are still sent within one month of the event. The LIC Coordinator is responsible for collecting all 0-5 Screening Collection forms relating to screening activities for children 0-5 years of age occurring in the service area. These reports are forwarded monthly to the State's Child Find Project Coordinator for statewide analysis and data compilation.

If you need assistance in locating the CFC associated with your school district, use the Illinois Department of Human Services Office Locator link at <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?>. A tool to locate the multiple types of DHS offices, including early intervention CFCs, is located at the bottom of the page.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact the Early Childhood Division at 217/524-4835, Kristy Doan at [kdoan@isbe.net](mailto:kdoan@isbe.net) or Crystal Grimes at [cgrimes@isbe.net](mailto:cgrimes@isbe.net).