



## Child Find

Child Find is part of the federal special education law known as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), that requires schools identify, locate, and evaluate all children, aged birth through 21 years, who have disabilities and may be entitled to special education and related services. Michigan is the only state which has a state law mandating (or requiring) special education for students with disabilities birth to 26 years of age. This law is known as the *Michigan Mandatory Special Education Act* (MMSE) and is part of the Revised School Code.

## The Child Find Process

Child Find is an active process for identifying students suspected of having a disability. The first step requires providing information to the public regarding the availability of special education services. Intermediate school districts (ISDs) post public awareness efforts for all districts within their ISD Plan. Some districts post this information on their websites. Announcements through local media, meetings, public health departments, and state education departments are also avenues of public notice. These notices must be posted annually to ensure all districts continue their efforts to seek out children and students who may need special education and related services.

When a parent, educator, doctor, other individual suspects a child may have a

disability, a request for a special education evaluation can be made to the student's teacher or administrator in the district. Within 10 school days of receipt of a written request for an initial evaluation of a student suspected of having a disability, and before any formal evaluations take place, the district will provide you with written notice and, when necessary shall request written consent to evaluate. The district will provide you with information about your family rights and procedural safeguards.

Upon receipt of signed consent, a district may evaluate the student and determine if there is a need for special education and related services. Child Find evaluations are conducted at no cost to the parents.

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## State Level Child Find Support

- [Early On](#)<sup>®</sup> is Michigan's early intervention program for children from birth to three years of age and provides family services to help a child reach typical milestones. *Early On* Michigan supports the IDEA by raising public awareness for locating and referring children who may be eligible for early intervention across Michigan.
- [Build Up Michigan](#): In partnership with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education (OSE), Build Up Michigan helps children ages 3-5 years get educational support and provides targeted outreach through public awareness campaigns for locating and referring all children who may be eligible across Michigan for special education and related services under the *Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education* (MARSE) and the IDEA.
- [Michigan Department of Education \(MDE\)](#): Monitors school district practices, policies, and procedures for children and young adults from birth through 25 years of age.

## Intermediate School Districts

ISDs must have a plan for the delivery of special education programs and services, including their Child Find efforts to identify, locate, and evaluate children suspected of having a disability, as well as a list of individuals who can be contacted for questions or to request an evaluation. The ISD and associated school districts must have policies and procedures to identify, locate, and evaluate individuals who are wards of the court, homeless, attend private schools, are incarcerated in jails or correctional facilities, or who are enrolled in adult education and who may have a disability under the IDEA and need special education and related services, even if they were not receiving special education before they entered the facility. Families should contact their local ISD or school district if they suspect their child has a disability.

## Child Find Components

More information in the [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education \(MARSE\)](#):

- **Public Awareness:** Public agencies providing education are federally obligated to post annual notice of outreach efforts to identify, locate, and evaluate all children who are suspected to have a disability.
- **Referral (ages birth to three):** School districts and service areas must accept referrals from any source, including a doctor.
- **Written Request for Initial Evaluation (ages 3-25 years):** When a written request for an evaluation is received, a district must provide notice of the intent to evaluate and, if appropriate, request your consent before starting the evaluation process. Only a parent or school district can request an initial evaluation.
- **Notice:** Before your child can be evaluated, the district must give you written information about the evaluation before requesting consent to evaluate your child.
- **Consent to Evaluate:** The district must have your written signature of parental consent before they can begin to evaluate your child.
- **Evaluation:** If the district receives your written parental consent to evaluate, the district will complete an evaluation following the IDEA and the MARSE.

## Resources



- Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR): [Child Find Handout](#)
- [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education \(MARSE\)](#)
- Michigan Department of Education (MDE): [Guidance for the Development of Intermediate School District \(ISD\) Plan for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services in Catamaran \(Dec 2020\)](#)