

## CHILD FIND BASICS

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et. seq) and California Education Code §56301 requires every Local Educational Agency (LEA) to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities in the state who are in need of special education and/ or related services regardless of the severity of their disability. LEA's are obligated to develop and implement a plan to locate all IDEA eligible students, including but not limited to students who are homeless or wards of the state. The process an LEA/district develops to locate and identify students with disabilities is known as Child Find. In order to fulfill their Child Find obligation, each LEA/district conduct's what are known as Child Find activities. Such activities may include the following:

- The use of a child find letter (i.e. "Child Find Sample Letter" located in the SEIS Document Library under IEP forms) to parents/guardians, or responsible party of a child who may need special education or related services in their primary language.
- Inclusion of targeted questions regarding areas of need and/or previous Special Education services in enrollment packets.
- Carefully screening files and enrollment documentation of all children transferring into the LEA/district to identify children who may have been receiving special services in their prior LEA/district.
- Providing information to parents that explains the LEA's/district's special services and who to contact if they suspect their child may have a disability.
- Utilizing a clear parent and teacher referral system (i.e. Student Study Team process. Please refer to the [EDCOE Charter SELPA Student Study Teams \(SST\) Handbook](#) for more information).
- Providing annual in-service activities to assist all staff in making appropriate referrals and on the Child Find process and obligation.
- Screening all children entering kindergarten to identify children with suspected disabilities.
- Review of files for all students with a health plan to screen for suspected disabilities.
- Publication of a child find notice in the LEA/district newsletter or website. This notice may also be included in the enrollment packet and sent home annually to parents.
- Creation of a poster or other document for display in the main office (and other prominent areas) which includes whom to contact if there is a student suspected to be eligible under IDEA.
- Sending Child Find notices to community agencies in conjunction with preschool screening activities (i.e. Regional Center, private schools within your LEA/district boundaries, Non Public Schools, etc.)
- Failing to meet Child Find requirements is a matter of serious concern that can deny a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) to a student whom a LEA/District should have identified. This failure may entitle a student to compensatory education or educationally related reimbursement accruing from the time the LEA/district first should have suspected the disability (Department of Education State of Hawaii
- Cari Rae S., 2001). Additionally, a LEA/district may be violating its Child Find duty by repeatedly referring a student for interventions rather than evaluating the student's need for special education and related services (see the Office of Special Education (OSEP) Memorandum to State Directors of Special Education, January 2011).

