

1001 – Child Find Procedures

The purpose of this document is to provide procedural information regarding charter school responsibilities for the creation and implementation of Child Find procedures.

Child Find Overview

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Child Find requires all school districts to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities from birth through age twenty-one (21), regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This obligation to identify all children who may need special education services exists even if the school is not providing special education services to the child. The IDEA requires all states to develop and implement a practical method of determining which children with disabilities are receiving special education and related services and which children are not.

Evaluations of children suspected of having a disability shall not be delayed or denied due to the response to instruction and intervention (RTI²) process. Charter schools must immediately initiate referral procedures for students at all grade levels suspected of having a disability, including students advancing from grade to grade and students who have been referred by a teacher, regardless of the amount of time the student has spent in a particular academic intervention.

Charter School Responsibilities

All Commission authorized charter schools are required to ensure that all children who have disabilities and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. The schools' Child Find program shall include at a minimum:

1. Established referral procedures, which ensure that all students who are suspected or known to be a child with a disability are referred to the special education evaluation team for further evaluation;
2. The ability of any person to refer a child to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team for reasons including, but not limited to:
 - Failure to pass a hearing or vision screening;
 - Unsatisfactory performance on group achievement tests or accountability measures;
 - Repeatedly failing one or more subjects;
 - Inability to progress or participate in developmentally appropriate activities; and
 - Receiving supports and services outside of the school setting;

3. Annually publicizing and disseminating information describing its Child Find program, including a description of the school's special education program, supports, and services, as well as the school contact person and his/her functions, including the manner by which he/she might be contacted for further information or referral;
4. The public display of Child Find information in a clearly visible, high-traffic area of the school including, but not limited to:
 - The main office; or
 - The school counselor's office;
5. Annually providing all parents/guardians of children with disabilities with information regarding their rights and responsibilities under federal and state special education laws;
6. Ensuring that all referrals from parents and others who suspect or know a child to have disability are forwarded to the special education evaluation team;
7. Providing parents/guardians with a written notice of any referral not initiated by the parent/guardian;
8. Annually training teachers and other relevant school staff on referral procedures, including that evaluations of children suspected of having a disability shall not be delayed or denied due to the RTI² process; and
9. Ensuring that there are continuing efforts related to cultural competency in relationship to public awareness and Child Find activities, such as the ability to communicate with and relate to parents and families in ways which are appropriate to their individual racial, ethnic, and/or cultural backgrounds.

Accountability

All authorized charter schools are required to submit their Child Find procedures to the Commission annually. Procedures must outline how the school conducts Child Find through public notice (i.e., website), referrals, and through the RTI² process.

The Commission shall conduct desktop monitoring to ensure that all charter schools abide by state timelines for initial evaluation and eligibility. Each quarter, the Commission shall pull the Initial Eligibility 60 Day Report in TN PULSE to ensure that schools complete initial evaluation and eligibility determination within sixty (60) calendar days of receiving parental consent for the initial evaluation, and that schools hold an initial meeting to develop an IEP within thirty (30) calendar days of determining that a student needs special education and related services.