
Child Find Guidelines

August 2017



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Introduction & Legal Framework

The starting point for any effective Special Education system is the appropriate identification and evaluation of children suspected of having a disability. This work begins with an established Child Find process. As described in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act §300.111, the requirements for Child Find are as follows:

*(a) General. (1) 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...**(c) Other children in child find. Child find must also include – (1) Children who are suspected of being a child with a disability under §300.8 and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade; and (2) Highly mobile children, including migrant children...*

This Child Find requirement is re-iterated in the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education R 340.1721a as follows:

*(1) **Each student suspected of having a disability shall be evaluated by a multidisciplinary evaluation team** as defined in R 340.1701b(b). In addition to the requirements in R 340.1705 to R 340.1717, the multidisciplinary evaluation team shall do all of the following: (a) Complete a full and individual evaluation. (b) Make a recommendation of eligibility and prepare a written report to be presented to the individualized education program team by the designated multidisciplinary evaluation team member who can explain the instructional implication of evaluation results. The report shall include information needed by the individualized education program team to determine all of the following: (i) Eligibility. (ii) A student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance. (iii) The educational needs of the student. (2) **Special education personnel who are authorized to conduct evaluations of students suspected of having a disability may provide consultation to general education personnel.***

Given these clear requirements on how to proceed when a student is suspected of having a disability, it is crucial that local districts have procedures in place to identify those students that are suspected of having a disability. There are several key components that districts must include as part of their child find procedures:

- 1) Public Awareness - School districts must regularly—at least once every school year—inform teachers, parents, non-public schools, and the local community about evaluation and special education services available at no cost to parents and about how to access

the services. Some possible options for public notification might include announcements or articles in the newspaper, billboards, postings on the district website, notification in district handbooks, etc. It is important that each district clearly identify a method for public awareness that will effectively reach the families residing in their district.

- 2) Responding to Written Requests from Parents – Parents may submit a written request for an evaluation if they have knowledge of, or suspect, that their child has a disability. Upon receipt of such request, the district must consider the request and within 10 school days provide parents with Notice in writing of their intent to evaluate or their refusal to evaluate in response to the parent’s written request. The written Notice must clearly describe all options considered but not selected and the rationale for each.
- 3) Identifying Students Suspected of Having a Disability – One of the most complex components of Child Find is establishing district procedures for identifying those children suspected of having a disability. The next section will provide guidance to districts in this area.

Much of this document will address Child Find procedures for students currently attending school. It is important to also address Child Find procedures for infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children.

Birth – 3

Early On is Michigan’s system for helping infants and toddlers who have developmental delays or are at risk for delays due to certain health conditions. This system provides supports and services to eligible children birth to age 3 and their families through the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C and the Michigan Department of Education. Referrals to Early On can be initiated by parents, child care providers, medical professionals, community agencies, or any other individual with a concern for a child’s development. In Ionia County, the Intermediate School District (ISD) oversees Early On, including accepting referrals. Referrals to Early On can be submitted online at www.ioniaisd.org/earlychildhood/early-on/. Once a referral is received, Early On staff will be assigned to meet with the family, complete developmental screenings and evaluations, and make recommendations to the family for any Early On services that may be appropriate for the child. Children in this age group may be eligible for Michigan Mandatory Special Education in addition to Early On, depending upon the percentage of their delay. All children must have a complete evaluation and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) completed within 45 calendar days of the receipt of the referral.

Preschool Aged Children Not Yet in School

For preschool aged children, the ISD aspires to implement a *no wrong door* approach, in which referrals can be accepted by either the ISD or the Local Educational Agency (LEA). If the referral is received by the ISD, the family will receive a home visit from ISD staff to obtain information from the parent about the concern and complete a comprehensive developmental screening using a tool such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). If the developmental screening in conjunction with the parent information suggests that the child may have a disability and warrants further evaluation, the Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) will be completed by the ISD and uploaded to Illuminate. It will then be forwarded to the LEA Special Education Coordinator so that the evaluation work can be assigned to the appropriate LEA evaluation team. If a REED is not warranted, a brief report is written and the information is kept on file for 7 years.

If the referral is received at the local district level, the local district in which the child resides will be responsible for following up with the family regarding the developmental concerns. In order to consistently address concerns for preschool aged children it is recommended that districts adopt an established procedure for responding to these concerns. The following procedures and timelines are recommended:

- 1) Any local district employee that receives information on developmental concerns for a preschool aged child should immediately direct those concerns to the Special Education Coordinator for the district
- 2) The Special Education Coordinator initiates contact with the family within 3 school days to find out more about the areas of concern
- 3) The Special Education Coordinator contacts a School Psychologist or Speech Therapist to complete an Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) with the family to provide an overview of the student's development in the areas of communication, fine motor, gross motor, problem solving, and personal-social skills. The ASQ would be completed within 10 school days.
- 4) If the ASQ indicates no areas of delay, the School Psychologist or Speech Therapist should provide the family with recommendations to address their areas of concern. If the ASQ indicates areas of delay, the School Psychologist or Speech Therapist administering the ASQ should report back to the Special Education Coordinator that a disability is suspected and a REED should be convened within 10 school days. When convening a REED, the Special Education Coordinator will invite the appropriate ancillary staff to represent all areas in which delays were detected.

School Aged Children: Providing Student Interventions & Teacher Supports

A district's Child Find obligation begins when there is suspicion that a child in the district has a disability that may be in need of special education and/or related services. However, not all children that experience difficulties in school are suspected of having a disability. There are a variety of existing structures in place to meet the needs of students. A few examples of existing structures in Ionia County would include Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Instructional Consultation Teams (ICT). School staff should pursue these, or other building/district support options to support struggling learners. In addition to providing support for struggling learners, these options also provide support for teachers that may need assistance in creating an instructional or behavioral match for students. Schools that do not have existing supports in place for reviewing student data and providing supports to students and teachers should consider implementing a support system for this purpose. Appendix C includes an example of a format that districts may wish to utilize.

Accessing these building/district supports should result in a clearly documented plan utilizing research-based interventions as well as evidence of frequent (e.g. weekly) progress monitoring of the student throughout the intervention period. When provided with research-based interventions that are implemented with fidelity, many students demonstrate a favorable response. However, teachers may find that a student has not demonstrated the desired response after a period of intervention. When this occurs, it is important that teams first evaluate the extent to which they have implemented the intervention as designed, otherwise known as implementation fidelity. Any implementation fidelity issues must be resolved before pursuing decisions related to suspicion of a disability.

School Aged Children: Establishing Suspicion of a Disability

In order to appropriately make decisions about the suspicion of a disability, each school building should have an established committee that teachers can access to engage in an objective review of student data. This committee may operate under different names such as Student Success Team, Student Support Team, Child Study Team, etc. It is suggested that these committees have the following components:

- Membership that represents all of the following:
 - Administrator
 - General Education Teacher(s)
 - Special Education Teacher(s)
 - School Psychologist
 - Intervention Staff (Interventionist, ICT Facilitator, MTSS Coach, etc.)

- Other Ancillary Staff (Social Worker, Speech Therapist, etc.), if appropriate
- School Counselor, if appropriate
- An established meeting schedule with a minimum of monthly scheduled meetings and the option to meet more frequently upon teacher request
- A clearly defined method for bringing a student to the committee that can be articulated by all instructional staff (see Appendix A: Student Support Team Request)
- An established meeting format for reviewing student performance data, student progress data, and peer expected data
- A meeting documentation form that provides an overview of the information reviewed and indicates whether or not a disability is suspected (see Appendix B: Student Support Team Meeting Summary)

When bringing a case to the committee, teachers should be prepared to bring and discuss the following:

- Student strengths
- State wide assessment data for both the target student and peers
- District wide assessment data for both the target student and peers, including both proficiency and growth data
- Documentation of any interventions that have been implemented, including student progress data through that intervention period and intervention fidelity data if available
- Classroom assessment data and work samples in the area(s) of concern
- Accommodations the students is currently receiving
- Attendance/discipline data if an area of concern
- Input from other teachers of the student, if applicable
- Input from parents
- Student CA60 should be available for review if needed

Before beginning the committee meeting, one member should be appointed to document the conversation as well as the recommendations of the committee. During the objective review of the data, the task for the committee is to determine if the preponderance of the evidence indicates that a disability is suspected. The table on the following page provides examples of situations in which the evidence may indicate that further intervention is needed as well as examples of situations in which the evidence may indicate that a disability is suspected. It is important to note that each student and situation are unique and the following sections are not definitive, they are merely guidance for the committee to consider.

| Factors That <u>May</u> Indicate Further Intervention is Needed | Factors That <u>May</u> Indicate Suspicion of a Disability |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Interventions have not been provided | Interventions have been implemented with fidelity |
| Interventions have not been implemented with fidelity | Student has a noticeable pattern of strengths and weaknesses |
| Student demonstrates low performance but a high rate of growth | Student demonstrates low performance AND a low rate of growth |
| Student has poor attendance | No evidence of other factors that could be impacting student performance |
| Peer comparison data indicates similar rates of proficiency/growth to target student | |
| Other factors that need to be resolved (hearing, vision, ESL, etc.) | |

If the conclusion of the committee is that further intervention is needed, it is important that the plan include not only the details for providing research-based interventions but also a clearly identified goal and plan for frequent (e.g., weekly) progress monitoring. If the conclusion of the committee is that a disability is suspected, it is imperative that the committee assign the individual responsible for initiating/scheduling the Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED). The REED must be completed within 10 school days of suspicion of a disability.

Appendix A: Student Support Team Request

Student Name: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Teacher Name:** _____

Section 1: In the following academic areas, circle whether the student is on/above grade level, has low performance compared to peers, or low growth compared to peers. If the student has both low performance AND low growth in that area please circle both.

| | | | |
|----------|----------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Reading: | On/Above Grade Level | Low Performance | Low Growth |
| Writing: | On/Above Grade Level | Low Performance | Low Growth |
| Math: | On/Above Grade Level | Low Performance | Low Growth |

Section II: Please circle the frequency of the following:

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| Tardy: | Rarely/Never | Sometimes | Frequent |
| Absent: | Rarely/Never | Sometimes | Frequent |
| Missing Work: | Rarely/Never | Sometimes | Frequent |
| Off Task: | Rarely/Never | Sometimes | Frequent |

Section III: Please check whether any of the following are concern areas:

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--|-----------|--|----------|--|---------------|--|
| Social: | | Behavior: | | Medical: | | Motor Skills: | |
| Emotional: | | Other: | | Other: | | Other: | |
| Communication: | | | | | | | |

Section IV: Please check any services/supports the student has received and be prepared to discuss:

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Instructional Consultation Teams | | Title Math | | Title Reading | | Trial Intervention (Circle) | SSW OT Speech |
| Tier 2 Intervention - Reading | | Tier 3 Intervention - Reading | | School Counselor | | IEP | |
| Tier 2 Intervention - Math | | Tier 3 Intervention - Math | | ELL Services | | 504 Plan | |
| Classroom Accommodation | | Other: | | Other: | | Other: | |

Have you shared these concerns with parent(s)?* Y N

If yes, do parents share your concerns? Y N

**If parents have not previously been contacted, make contact before meeting*

Please submit this form to _____ to initiate a review meeting. At this meeting you will be requested to share the following data: student's current performance on classroom/district/state assessments, performance of typical peers on the same assessments, details on the current intervention plan, student's progress data during intervention and the progress made by typical peers during that same time.

Appendix B: Student Support Team Meeting Summary

Student: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Date:** _____ **Teacher:** _____

Meeting Participants: _____

Section I: Student Strengths & Needs (Data-Based)

Strengths: _____

Needs/Areas of Concern: _____

Section II: Intervention History (Attach student progress graph)

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| #1) Area Targeted for Intervention: | | Length of Intervention (# of weeks): | | Goal for End of Intervention: | |
| Description of Intervention: | | | | | |
| Baseline Data (performance prior to intervention): | | Data at End of Intervention: | | | |
| #2) Area Targeted for Intervention: | | Length of Intervention (# of weeks): | | Goal for End of Intervention: | |
| Description of Intervention: | | | | | |
| Baseline Data (performance prior to intervention): | | Data at End of Intervention: | | | |

Section III: Intervention Outcomes Compared to Intervention Goal

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goal was met on time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Trendline/consecutive data points show student on track to meet or exceed goal on time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Trendline/consecutive data points show student not on track to meet or exceed goal on time |

Section IV: Student Growth Compared to Rate of Growth of Peers (Academic Concerns Only)

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Trendline shows student making at least one year's growth in one year's time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Consecutive data points show growth, with data points not far from aim line |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Trendline shows student making less than one year's growth in one year's time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Consecutive data points show scores far below aim line with very little growth |

Section V: Additional Comments:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Section VI: Outcomes/Recommendations

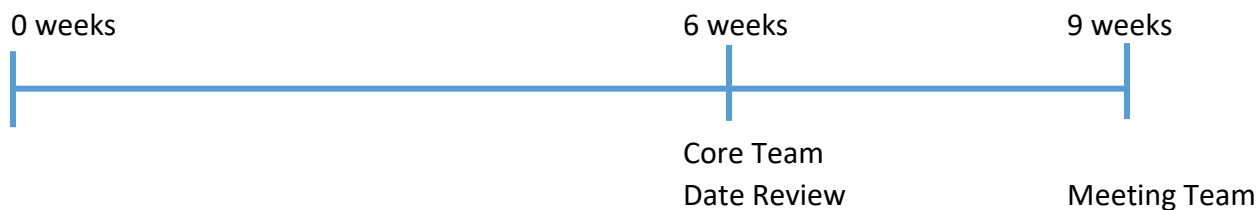
| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Disability Suspected: Y N | If Yes, _____ to schedule a REED by ___ / ___ /20__* |
| <small>*REED must be completed within 10 school days of the Suspicion of Disability</small> | |
| If No, next steps are: _____ Continue current intervention _____ Redesign intervention | |
| Other: _____ | |

Appendix C: Sample Process for Student Data Review & Intervention

This document provides a brief outline of a structure for a periodic review of student data, identification of at-risk students, development of interventions, monitoring of student response to intervention, and identifying students suspected of having a disability. Buildings without an existing structure for these activities may wish to consider adopting this, or a similar procedure.

This process begins with identification of both a Core Team and a Meeting Team. Suggested Core Team members include the Principal, Social Worker, School Psychologist, and Counselor. Suggested Meeting Team members include all members from the Core Team PLUS a General Education Teacher from each grade level, a Special Education Teacher, and additional ancillary staff as appropriate

This process follows a 9-week cycle that repeats 4 times each school year.



Weeks 0 – 6: Student level data is entered into a spreadsheet on an ongoing basis. Each student is assigned a score of 0, 1, or 2 on a number of variables. A higher number indicates a higher level of risk or concern.

- 0 = Student is functioning at the grade level mean or performance indicates “no risk”
- 1 = Student is functioning 1 standard deviation below the mean or performance indicates “some risk”
- 2 = Student is functioning 2 standard deviations below the mean or performance indicates “high risk”

Suggested variables for review are listed below but additional variables specific to the building may also be added.

- Attendance
- District Testing & State Testing
 - There may be multiple columns depending on the number of assessments administered at the district & state level for each grade.
- Grades
- Behavior (Discipline Referrals)
- Teacher Referral (0 if not present, 2 if present)

Week 6: Core Team meets for a data review. The sum of the indicator scores are calculated and students are ordered. Students with the highest risk factor scores at each grade level are identified for referral to the meeting team.

Weeks 6 – 8: A member of the Core Team is assigned to collect the following 3 pieces of information for each student:

- Teacher input
- Observation
- Parent input/parent invitation to the upcoming review meeting

Week 9: At the end of each 9 week cycle the Meeting Team has a full day meeting to review the students that were identified from the 6 week data review and also to follow up on students from the previous cycle.

- For students new to the team (just identified as at-risk at the 6 week data review) the meeting team will engage in a 30 minute meeting following meeting mechanics. See pages 11-12 of this document for the Meeting Team – Meeting Mechanics documentation form. Topics for discussion include:
 - Review of data
 - Establish problem/concern
 - Brainstorm strategies/interventions
 - Select plan for implementation
 - Assign an advocate to the case that has specific responsibilities for communicating with all of the student’s teachers and following up to ensure that plan has been implemented
- For students that were brought to a previous Meeting Team there will be devoted time at the end of the meeting to get an update on progress using the Student Support Team Meeting Summary (Appendix B). Data will be reviewed and the team will make recommendations for continued intervention, change in intervention, or suspicion of a disability. If a disability is suspected this will be reflected on the Student Support Team Meeting Summary and the case will be taken to the appropriate person for initiation of a REED.

Meeting Team – Meeting Mechanics

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Meeting Attendees:

Data Review (3 minutes):

Problem Identification (8 minutes):

Student strengths:

Prioritized area of concern:

Brainstorm (6-8 minutes):

Meeting Team - Meeting Mechanics, cont.

Intervention Action Plan (5 minutes):

| Who | Is Doing What | By When? | Status |
|-----|---------------|----------|--------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Success criteria/How will we know the intervention plan is working:

Determine data to progress monitor and graph (3 minutes):

Advocate assigned: