

Indiana Area School District
Notice of Special Education Services and Programs – Child Find

Each school district, along with other public agencies in the Commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice is to help find these children, offer assistance to parents, and describes the parents' rights with regard to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during this process. The content of this notice has been written in English. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the school district and request an explanation.

Identification Activities

Child Find refers to activities undertaken by public education agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate children residing in the State, including children attending private schools, who are suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and determine the child's need for special education and related services. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available. The types of disabilities that cause a child to need services are: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment due to chronic or acute health problems, specific learning disabilities, speech or language, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment including blindness. In the case of a child that is of preschool age, developmental delay. Each school district is required to annually provide notice describing the *identification* activities and the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of *personally identifiable information*. This notice is intended to meet this requirement.

Identification activities are performed to find a child who is suspected as having a disability that would interfere with his or her learning unless special education programs and services are made available. These activities are sometimes called *screening* activities. The activities include: review of group data, conducting hearing and vision screening, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior and determining the student's response to attempted remediation. Input from parents is also an information source for *identification*. After a child is identified as a suspected *child with a disability*, he or she is evaluated, but is not evaluated before parents give permission for their child to be evaluated.

Confidentiality

If after screening a disability is identified, upon your permission, your child will be evaluated. A written record of the results is called an education record, which are directly related to your child and are maintained by the school district. These records are personally identifiable to your child. *Personally identifiable information* includes the child's name, the name of the child's parents or other family member, the address of the child or their family, a personal identifier such as social security number, a list of characteristics that would make the child's identity easily traceable, or other information that would make the child's identity easily traceable. The school district will gather information regarding your child's physical, mental, emotional and health functioning through testing and assessment, observation of your child, as well as through review of any records made available to the school district through your physician and other providers of services such as day care agencies.

The school district protects the confidentiality of *personally identifiable information* by one school official being responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of the records, training being provided to all persons using the information, and maintaining for public inspection a current list of employee names and positions who may have access to the information. The school district will inform you when this information is no longer needed to provide educational services to your child and will destroy the information at the request of the parent. However, general information such as your child's name, address, phone number, grades, attendance record and classes attended, and grade level completed may be maintained without time limitation.

As the parent of the child, you have a number of rights regarding the confidentiality of your child's records, including the right to inspect and review any education records related to your child that are collected, maintained, or used by the school district. The school district will comply with a request for you to review the records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding planning for your child's special education program (called an IEP meeting), before a hearing should you and your school district disagree about how to educate your child who needs special education and, in no case, take more than 45 days to furnish you the opportunity to inspect and review your child's records.

You have the right to an explanation and interpretations of the records, to be provided copies of the records if failure to provide the copies would effectively prevent you from exercising your right to inspect and review the records, and the right to have a representative inspect and review the records. Upon your request, the school district will provide you a list of the types and location of education records collected, maintained, or used by the agency. The district will not charge a fee to search or retrieve information.

You have the right to request the amendment of your child's education records that you believe are inaccurate or misleading, or violate the privacy or other rights of your child. The school district will decide whether to amend the records within a reasonable time of receipt of your request. If the school district refuses to amend the records, you will be notified of the refusal and your right to a hearing. You will be given at that time, additional information regarding the hearing procedures and, upon request, the district will provide you a records hearing to challenge information in your child's education files.

Parent consent is required before *personally identifiable information* contained in your child's education records is disclosed to anyone other than officials of the school district collecting or using the information for purposes of identification of your child, locating your child and evaluating your child, or for any other purpose of making available a free appropriate public education to your child. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Additionally, the school district, upon request, discloses records without consent to officials of another school district in which your child seeks or intends to enroll. When a child reaches age 18, the rights of the parent with regard to confidentiality of *personally identifiable information* is transferred to the student.

A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided to: Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, Division of Compliance, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333. The Department of Education will investigate the matter and issue a report of findings and necessary corrective action within 60 days. The Department will take necessary action to ensure compliance is achieved. Complaints alleging failures of the school district with regard to confidentiality of personally identifiable information may also be filed with: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Education Services for Incarcerated Students

Indiana Area School District, within whose boundaries a local correction institution is located, complies fully with the requirements of the IDEA and Chapter 14 regarding the identification, evaluation, placement and provision of special education services to all eligible school-age individuals housed therein. Eligible students are entitled to receive special education both when they are charged with a criminal offense and are awaiting trial and after they have been convicted of a criminal offense.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students

Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may qualify as protected handicapped students and, therefore, be protected by other federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination. The school district must insure that protected handicapped students have an equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for the individual student. In compliance with state and federal law, the school district will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities, to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school-age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in, or access to, an aspect of the school program.

Early Intervention Identification

In Pennsylvania, a child between 3 years of age and the school district's age to begin school who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or mental conditions listed above is identified as an "eligible young child." The parents of these children have the same rights described above. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the Early Intervention Services System Act. Screening for preschool children is available through the ARIN Intermediate Unit. For more information, contact the ARIN Early Intervention Service Coordinator at 724-463-5300.

Educating Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learners (ELL)

The education of students whose dominant language is not English is the responsibility of every school district/charter school in the Commonwealth. English language learners must be enrolled upon presentation of a local address and proof of immunization. The school district/charter school must administer a home language survey (HLS) to all students as required by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The results of that survey must be retained in the student's permanent folder. For those students whose primary language is other than English (PHLOTE), the district must also determine the student's English language proficiency. Then, ESL instruction at the appropriate level must be provided for the limited English proficient student with local/state funds.

The Indiana Area School District will provide ongoing screening services. If you wish to learn more, have questions, or believe your child may need to be identified, please contact: Ms. Roberta Mack, Coordinator of Special Programs, at 724-463-8713.

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