What is a Community Collaborative?

A Community Collaborative is an informed referral network that is comprised of community partners working together to serve young children and their families. Relationships with community partners have proven to be the most effective practice in identifying children with special needs.

Informed Referral Network
One Tapestry...Many Threads

Community Partners May Include:

Advocates
Bilingual Services
Child Care Providers
Childcare Resource and Referral
County Agencies
County Birth to 3 Programs
Domestic Abuse Services
Faith Based Organizations
Families
Family Resource Centers
Guardians
Head Start/Early Head Start
Health Care Providers
Health/Social Service Depts.
Higher Education
Homeless Liaisons
Home Visiting Programs
Law Enforcement
Local School Districts
Migrant Services
Parents
Physicians/Doctors
Preschool Providers
Public, Private, and Home Schools
Public Libraries
Recreation Service Providers
Service Clubs
Shelters
State Agencies
Tribal Head Start
Tribal Service Providers
Women, Infants, and Children
Other

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Child Find is a continuous process of public awareness activities, screening, and evaluation.

This is an informational handout for Local Education Agencies (LEA).
Why Child Find?
The purpose of Child Find for children ages birth to 21 is to ensure that children with disabilities have access to free, appropriate public education, including special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.

All states must identify, locate, and evaluate all children who may have special needs.
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires all states to have policies and procedures in effect to ensure that all children, who are in need of early intervention or special education, receive services. All states must identify, locate, and evaluate all children with special needs including infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children in private, public or tribal schools, highly mobile, homeless, or migrant children, home schooled children and wards of the state.

Federal and State law require the following notices be placed in newspapers or other media:

Model Notice of Child Find Activity: Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information
Model Notice to Parents and Individuals Required to Make Referrals

Notices are available at: sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_childfind

In addition, LEA’s shall do the following:
Establish written procedures for accepting and processing referrals
Document and date the receipt of each referral
Provide information and in-service opportunities to all of its licensed staff to familiarize them with the agency’s referral procedures
At least annually, inform parents and persons required to make referrals about the LEA’s referral and evaluation procedures
Within 15 business days of receiving a referral, send the child’s parents a request for consent to evaluate or a notice that no additional data is necessary.

Timelines are available at:

What is the Purpose of Child Find Screening?
Screening is a continuous process to locate and identify children at risk. Screening utilizes multiple sources of information, including the administration of a standardized screening tool, to guide decisions about “next steps” to address individual children’s needs.

Screening Is Designed To:
Educate families about typical child development and growth
Develop/Expand awareness of available community resources
Identify young children in need of further assessment

The critical nature of timely intervention cannot be overstated.

Screening Should Be:
Sensitive to the child’s cultural background
Based upon multiple sources of information
Based on valid, reliable, and normative samples
Easily administered and cost effective