Finding Early Childhood Children with Disabilities
Child Find is a continuous process of public awareness activities which may include screening, designed to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who may be in need of early intervention programs or special education as soon as possible.
Screening for Child Find

- Identifies children who require further evaluation
- Brief & General
- Not intended to use for program placement or diagnosis
Prevalence of Children with Disabilities:

• Approximately 12–16% of children have disabilities

• Only 30% of children with disabilities are detected before school entrance

Incidence of children identified as having a disability by age

0 – 3 Years: 2.8%
3 – 5 Years: 6.0%
6 – 21 Years: 10.5%

http://www.ideadata.org
Why Screen?

BECAUSE WE ARE MISSING CHILDREN!
National Initiative
Birth to Five - Watch me Thrive!
Child Find is a Continuous Process

1. Screen
2. Identify
3. Locate
4. Evaluate
5. Provide Services
6. Raise Awareness

Circle flowchart showing the process of Child Find.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Comprehensive Child Find System ensures that all children who are in need of early intervention or special education services are identified, located, and evaluated.
Lead Agencies in Wisconsin

Part C – Birth to 3
Department of Health Services
County Administrative Agency

Part B – 3 through 21
Department of Public Instruction
Local School Districts
Child Find Includes All Children

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers
Private, public or tribal school children
Highly mobile children
Homeless children
Home Schooled Children
Migrant children
Wards of the state
LEA Requirements

Local Education Agencies are required to post:

1. Model Notice of Child Find Activity: Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information

2. Model Notice to Parents and Individuals Required to Make Referrals

http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/laws-procedures-bulletins/procedures/childfind
3. According to Wisconsin State Statute 115.77, LEAs shall do all of the following:

- Identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services
- Establish written procedures for accepting and processing referrals
- Document and date the receipt of each referral
LEA Requirements

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 to the child's parents a request for consent to evaluate or a notice that no additional data is necessary.
Evaluation Timelines

1. Referral Received or Notice Initiating Reevaluation
   - IEP Team Reviews Existing Data
   - Up to 15 Business Days

2. Request Parent Consent for Evaluation
   - Receipt of Parent Consent for Evaluation
   - Up to 60 Calendar Days

3. Determine Eligibility
   - Within 30 Calendar Days

4. Develop IEP and Determine Placement

---

*“Business day” means Monday through Friday except for Federal and State holidays.*
Individual Educational Program (IEP) & Placement Timelines

- Contact Parent and Arrange a Mutually Agreeable Time and Place for the IEP Team Meeting
- Send Notice – Invitation to IEP Team Meeting
- IEP Team Meets to Develop IEP and Determine Placement
  - If evaluation or reevaluation, meeting must occur within 30 calendar days of eligibility determination
  - If initial IEP and placement, parental consent required before services can be provided
  - Reasonable amount of time before IEP and placement implemented (LEA should consider amount of time mail takes to go through the processing and mail system)
- Send Placement Notice and Copy of Finalized IEP to Parent
- Implement IEP and Placement*
- Periodically Review and Revise, as Appropriate
  - At least annually, IEP team meets to review progress toward IEP goals, consider special factors, and determine placement. Revise IEP as appropriate, to address lack of expected progress toward annual goals and in general education curriculum; results of any reevaluation; information provided to, or by, parents; the child's anticipated needs; or other matters.

*At the beginning of each school year, each LEA must have an IEP in effect for each student from whom the district has FAPE responsibility

May 2013
Past Practices

1. Children were screened to determine readiness for kindergarten

2. Locally developed screening tools were used

3. Children were screened at “stations” and usually separated from parents

4. Parents had limited involvement in screening

5. Child Development Days were held
Current Practices

1. All children screened as early as possible.

2. Screening instruments used are valid, reliable and have normative samples.

3. Child Find is a continuous process rather than a single event.

4. Parents are recognized as experts on their children’s development.

5. Community resources are shared with families of young children.
What is an Informed Referral Network?

A coordinated effort by community partners to:

Identify
Locate
Evaluate

all children with a disability
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 Departments
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 (WIC)
Other
Benefits of an Informed Referral Network?

- Provide Information
- Create a Feeling of Support
- Disseminate Information about Resources
- Build Partnerships
- Deepen Relationships
- Collaborative Community Councils
Making connections with community partners has proven to be the most effective practice in identifying young children with special needs.

Carl Dunst and Patricia Clow 2007
Where Do We Start?

• Think about the life styles, attitudes and interests of families in your community

• Choose those methods which you think will work most effectively and efficiently on a continuous basis

• Contact a wide range of community partners to serve as your informed referral network
Public Awareness

Child Find brochures placed in your community

District/Community Websites/Billboards

Public Service Announcements

• Direct mailings/emails
• Websites/facebook/twitter
• News media
Types of Screening

Newborn
Blood Levels
Vision/Hearing
Developmental/Behavioral
  Autism
  Social/Emotional
  Learning and Development

Universal Screening for Instruction (PreK–12)
Screening is Designed To

**Educate** families about typical child development

**Develop/Expand** awareness of community resources for young children and their families

**Identify** young children in need of further evaluation
Screening Activities Should Include

Parent and/or care giver involvement

Sensitivity to the child’s cultural background/primary language

Results reviewed by trained personnel and shared with parents
Screening Instrument Considerations

- Age appropriate
- Easily administered
- Cost effective
- Based on valid, reliable and normative samples
Developmental Screeners

Suggested Examples:

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)

Parents’ Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)
Where and When Could Child Find Screenings Occur?

Where:
- Child Care Settings
- Libraries
- Family Resource Centers
- Medical Settings
- Head Start
- Schools
- Home
- Other

When:
- Anytime there is a request for screening
- Monthly, quarterly, yearly
- In combination w/ other school events (4K/5K registration)
- In combination with other community events
Who can be involved in Child Find Screening?

• Each school district identifies a screening team.

• The screening team may consist of regular education staff, special education staff and/or community partners/agencies.
Re-Screening

General Education staff *may* rescreen

Special Education staff *may not* rescreen
Universal Screening

A process utilizing multiple sources of information, including administration of a quick, standardized screening tool or tools; to guide decisions about “next steps” to address individual children’s needs.

- to identify children with suspected disabilities (as required of public schools under IDEA Child Find)
- Never provides a diagnosis
- Intended to answer one question ... do we need to take a closer look?

- to establish a baseline for curriculum planning for a group of children
- to determine how well children are performing relative to a benchmark for a specified outcome area
- can include use of curriculum-based assessments at select points across the year
RtI does not require that children go through a multi-tiered system of supports prior to being referred to special education, thereby delaying and often restricting referral to special services.
Next steps would include:

- Referral
- Evaluation
- Determination of a Disability and a need for Special Education
Child Find is a continuous process of public awareness activities which may include screening, designed to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who may be in need of early intervention programs or special education as soon as possible.
1. Many families have stories about the frustration they faced in finding out what services might be available for their child. Professionals in education, medicine, social services, and child care can help by being knowledgeable about early intervention services in their community. How is your school district making connections with your community partners?

2. Having a program available for young children with special needs does not ensure that the children who need such services will find their way to the program. What is your school district implementing to insure that children are receiving services that are needed?

3. Parents frequently report that it takes much time and effort to discover how to access assessment and intervention services for a child with special needs. What could a school district do to educate parents and community about timelines?
4. Child Find is a systematic process of identifying young children who may be eligible for enrollment in special education. Child Find efforts are designed to inform the general public about typical and atypical child development as well as referral procedures. How does your school district do this?

5. Some children who participate in Child Find activities may be “at risk” for developing a disability because of environmental or biological factors. List possible follow-ups for this “at risk” child.

6. When a school district is formulating goals for Child Find activities they should consider 6 factors (provide information, create feeling of support, disseminate information about resources, build partnership, deepen relationships and develop collaborative community councils). Describe what your school district is doing to formulate Child Find awareness goals.
Optional Discussion Activity

7. Screenings are generally easily administered, adequate normative samples, valid, reliable, and inexpensive. Does the screening instrument you presently use in your school district meet the above criteria?

8. How does your district ensure a quick response to a request for screening and share screening results?

9. Sometimes children who passed the screening are later found to need special education services. Discuss how this can be prevented.

10. Sometimes children are referred for a special education evaluation and found not be eligible for services. Discuss why they were referred and what follow-up could be provided.
Questions?
Child Find Resources

Collaborating Partners
www.collaboratingpartners.com

Wisconsin Birth to Three Program
http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/disabilities-support.php#programsupport

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/early-childhood/child-find

Wisconsin CESA Early Childhood Contacts
http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/disabilities-support.php#programsupport
“We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are formed, his blood is being made, and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer ‘Tomorrow’, his name is Today.”

Gabriela Mistral 1889–1957