

Child Find

What is Child Find?

Child Find is a legal requirement that helps ensure children and young adults with disabilities are identified and connected to the special education services they may need.

Under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 34 CFR §300.111**, school districts must have policies and procedures to identify, locate, and evaluate children who have, or may have, a disability and may need special education and related services.

Child Find is an **affirmative and ongoing responsibility**. This means schools must actively look for and respond to children who may need special education—not simply wait for a parent or teacher to request an evaluation.

Who Does Child Find Apply To?

Federal law applies Child Find to children with disabilities from **birth through age 21**. Michigan provides additional protections. Under the **Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE)** and Michigan law, Michigan's special education requirements extend through **age 25**.

Child Find applies regardless of a child's:

- Severity or type of disability
- School or educational setting
- Academic performance
- Enrollment status

This includes children and young adults who are:

- Suspected of having a disability, even if they are progressing from grade to grade
- Homeschooled or attending a private or religious school
- Attending a virtual, alternative, or adult education program
- Experiencing homelessness or are highly mobile
- Wards of the state
- Living in a child care institution or residential setting
- Receiving services at home or in a hospital
- Under age 26 and have left school before completing their education

How Does Child Find Work?

Child Find is a **community responsibility**. Local school districts and the St. Joseph County ISD work with families, early childhood programs, health care providers, public agencies, and community organizations to identify children who may need special education services.

The **Michigan Revised School Code and MARSE** require ISDs and school districts to maintain procedures and outreach activities to inform families and the community about special education opportunities and Child Find responsibilities.

Our Commitment

The St. Joseph County ISD and local school districts are committed to ensuring that children and young adults who may have a disability are **identified, located, evaluated, and connected to appropriate special education and related services**.

If you have concerns about your child's development, learning, communication, behavior, or ability to participate in school, please contact your local school district.