

WHAT IS CHILD FIND?

*From the desk of Elizabeth O'Connell
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Federal Law, specifically, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), contains the Child Find Mandate. There are two purposes for the specific regulations:

- 1. To ensure that all schools have a practical method for locating, identifying, and evaluating all children with disabilities, from birth to age 21.**
- 2. To ensure that a coordinated system of Early Intervention Services for infants and toddlers with disabilities exists.**

Specifically, early childhood screenings provide a way of observing a child's development in areas such as speech and language, learning, social growth, fine and gross motor, vision and hearing. A screening can also provide information about a child's strengths and areas of difficulty, and further provides an opportunity for parents and guardians to discuss their concerns.

For Dedham residents, parents, guardians and/or persons in a care giving or professional position concerned with a child's development may request such a screening. Specifically, parents/guardians may question whether or not their child has a special need that could potentially interfere with future learning.

The Dedham Public School conducts preschool screenings on a continuous basis throughout the school year, and screening results are shared with parents/guardians. A child who demonstrates significant difficulties may be recommended for a more in-depth special education evaluation which may only be conducted with written parent consent.

To meet the obligations of the Child Find mandate, the Dedham Public Schools, on an annual basis, public a notice on the District's website, as well as in local papers, and other print media. A mailing to daycare providers, nursery schools, private schools, and major pediatric medical groups also occurs.

For more information, please contact Paul Sullivan, Early Childhood Center Principal, at psullivan@dedham.k12.ma.us.

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