

Child Find

CFISD must have in effect policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities, including students with disabilities who are homeless children or wards of the state and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated.

Referral of students for possible special education services must be a part of the district's overall, general education referral and screening system. Students experiencing difficulty in the general education classroom should be considered for all support services available to all students; such as tutorials, remedial and/or compensatory support, response to evidence-based intervention and other academic or behavioral support services. A student is not required to be provided with interventions for any specific length of time prior to a referral being made or a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) being considered. If the student continues to experience difficulty in the general education classroom with the provision of interventions, district personnel must refer the student for a FIIE. The referral for FIIE may be initiated by school personnel, the student's parent or legal guardian, or another person involved in the education or care of the student.

Child find must also include:

- Children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade;
- Highly mobile children, including migrant children; and
- Parentally placed private school children with disabilities
 - CFISD must locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary schools and secondary schools located within CFISD attendance boundaries.
 - The child find process must be designed to ensure (a) the equitable participation of parentally placed private school children and (b) an accurate count of those children
 - The child find process must be completed in a time period comparable to that for other students attending public schools in CFISD.
 - CFISD will consult with private school representatives and representatives of parents of privately-placed private school children with disabilities regarding the child find process, including (a) how parentally placed private school children suspected of having a disability can participate equitably and (b) how parents, teachers and private school officials will be informed of the process.
 - The cost of carrying out child find, including individual evaluations, may not be considered in determining if CFISD has met its obligations related to proportionate share.

CFISD maintains a system for informing the community concerning service options available for students who are in need of special education and related services. The district also coordinates its public awareness activity efforts with Region 4 Education Service Center. Activities included, but are not limited to:

- Information regarding Child Find with the CFISD can be found under Special Education link on the district web site
- Information regarding special education services available through the school district, campus newsletters and newsletters sent to district residents

- Child Find Announcement on the direct TV channel
- Dissemination of information to private/parochial schools, community physicians, nursing homes, daycare centers, residential care facilities and other public/private agencies or organizations as deemed appropriate
- Utilization of a Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC)
- Receiving and maintaining information from ECI agencies regarding students approaching three years of age. This information is used for the purposes of identification, planning and programming.
- District staff communicates with parents regarding available services through face to face parent meetings.
- Contacts with state and local agencies/organizations that have an interest in the welfare of children
- Responding to Region 4 ESC or Texas Education Agency advertisements and/or publications
- Displaying posters in several languages in public areas on district campuses

Training in Child Find is provided for district support staff, campus staff and other personnel who are frequently the initial contacts for inquiries regarding the identification of children who may need special education services. The referral process is part of Child Find for each campus.

The Director of Special Education and/or his/her designee will maintain documentation of Child Find communications. Assistance regarding referral to the appropriate individuals or agencies will be provided to parents whose children are not enrolled in the district.

NOTE: Children who have previously received special education services and whose parents have subsequently revoked consent for special education and related services should not be treated any differently in the child find process than any other child, including a child who was determined eligible and whose parent refused to provide initial consent for services.

Who are Eligible Students?

Children residing in the CFISD, children attending a private non-profit school located within the district boundaries and children with disabilities who are homeless or wards of the State, who (a) meet age requirements, (b) are suspected of having a disability and (c) may have a need for specially-designed instruction and related services.

Age Requirements for Services

- Services are available from birth to students with visual or auditory impairments
- Services are available to other eligible students beginning on their third birthday.
- Services are available to all eligible students ages 3-21 as follows:
 - For school-age children, failure to respond to early intervening services should be documented by the campus SIT team.
 - For school-age children, the suspected disability must be interfering with the student's educational progress, as measured by failure to respond to interventions, in order to warrant a referral.
 - Students who are not currently enrolled on a campus in CFISD may also be referred by the principal, designee of the student's school/private school, physician, parent, etc.
 - Graduation with a regular high school diploma terminates a student's eligibility to

receive services. An eligible student receiving special education services who is 21 years of age on September 1 of a school year shall be eligible for services through the end of that school year or until graduation with a regular high school diploma, whichever comes first.

Prohibition on Mandatory Medication

CFISD may not require parents to obtain prescriptions for a child as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation or receiving special education services. Teachers and school personnel may consult with the parent, or child's physician (in accordance with proper consent from the parent), in order to share information regarding a student's academic, behavioral, emotional, and physical functioning as observed in the school setting or to facilitate eligibility requirements regarding the need for special education or related services. CFISD reserves the right under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to complete components of evaluations for the disability of Other Health Impairment where Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the suspected disability. Such evaluations will be completed by appropriate professionals including, but not limited to, Licensed Specialists in School Psychology and Licensed Psychologists whether employed part/full-time by CFISD or retained on a contractual basis. The multidisciplinary team that collects or reviews such data shall include a licensed physician.

Expedited Referrals

Occasionally, school-age students with significant disabilities enroll and have not previously received services under IDEA in a public school. The students may be arriving from another country, a private school, or home schooling and do not have a valid assessment from a public school in accordance with IDEA regulations. Since these students are not eligible for special education, they must enroll in general education and the campus would initiate a referral. These referrals need to progress very quickly in order for the child to receive special education services as soon as possible. In most cases the initial placement ARDs are held in 5-8 school days.

Criteria:

- Significant disabilities are obvious
- No records of special education services through IDEA
- The student is enrolling in CFISD.

If a parent requests an evaluation, and signs consent, this allows for movement directly to referral for a FIE.

If campus appraisal staff review data from outside source(s) and determine that educational need and disability condition(s) are probable, a decision may be made to refer for an FIE.

NOTE: All expedited referrals must be approved by the Director of Special Education or the Assistant Director of Student Appraisal.