

Child Find and How to Refer – Age 3-21

What is Child Find?

Child Find is a mandate under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that require school districts to identify and evaluate children who may need special education and related services. All children with disabilities who live in the State, no matter how severe their perceived level of disability is, who need special education and related services, are to be identified, located, and evaluated. This includes children with disabilities who are homeless, or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities who go to public or private schools. This also includes **all** children who are suspected of having a disability, **including** children who receive passing grades and are “advancing from grade to grade.”



How to Refer your Child Ages 3-21



Each county in Maryland has a contact for families of children ages 3-5 and school aged children. There may be one phone number to refer children ages 3-5 and another number for school aged children. It's best to search on the internet for “Child Find” and the name of your county and follow the directions on your county's website. Make sure you are on the real county website with “.org” at the end of the web address or link. For school aged children, you may be told to call or contact the principal of your child's school. They will ask you what your concerns are, and you may say what you notice and observe to be any “red flags”. The referral should be made in writing, either by letter or email. Any person can make a referral to Child Find including parents, doctors, teachers, or a social service provider.

What happens after I contact the school?

After referring your child, you will be contacted by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Facilitator, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) Facilitator, or other school staff member from your child's local school to schedule a screening meeting. In a screening meeting, the team will review all information about your child including any information you give them from doctors, childcare providers, or teachers. When possible, bring your child to the meeting to do the activities. When evaluations are done, the team (including you) will meet to talk about the results of evaluations and decide your child's eligibility for special education and related services. If your child is determined to be eligible, the team will create an IFSP or IEP best for your child.



A child does not automatically qualify for special education services just because they have a disability. The legal standard is whether the child, because of the disability, needs special education and related services in order to make meaningful educational progress. Education includes academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular aspects of school. When looking at educational performance, the child's social skills as well as their academic skills must be considered.

Children who have may have a disability and need accommodations or services, but who the school has determined do not need special education and related services may be eligible for a Section 504 Plan. [Learn more about a Section 504 plan here.](#)

Age 3-21 MD Public Schools “Maryland Child Find”

- Allegany County 301-759-2402
- Anne Arundel County 410-766-6662
- Baltimore City 443-984-1011
- Baltimore County 443-809-3017
- Calvert County 443-550-8381
- Caroline County 410-479-3246
- Carroll County 410-876-4437
- Cecil County 410-996-5450
- Charles County 301-934-3884
- Dorchester County 410-228-4747 ext. 1023
- Frederick County 301-644-5276 or 5296
- Garrett County 301-334-7658
- Harford County 410-638-4386
- Howard County 410-313-7046
- Kent County 410-778-7164
- Montgomery County 301-947-6080
- Prince George’s County 301-925-6600 (Ages 3-5) 301-618-8300 (Ages 6 & up)
- Queen Anne’s County 410-758-2403 ext. 131
- Somerset County 410-623-2037
- St. Mary’s County 301-475-5511 ext. 32223
- Talbot County 410-822-0330 ext. 150
- Washington County 301-766-8509
- Wicomico County 410-677-5250
- Worcester County 410-632-5033
- Maryland School for the Blind 410-444-5000
- Maryland School for the Deaf 410-480-4545

Sources: [A Family Guide to Early Intervention Services in Maryland](#) and [Federal Child Find Mandate](#)

Additional Resources

- [Special Education Rights: A Handbook for Maryland Families and Professionals – 13th Edition](#) (2020): A 58-page handbook designed as a guide for helping families navigate the special education system and IEP process. Includes sample forms and letters.
- [Los Derechos a la Educación Especial \(2020\)](#)
- [Disability Rights Maryland and Parent’s Place of Maryland Collaborative Guide to Special Education for Maryland Parents and Families](#) (2021)
- [Guía colaborativa para Educación especial para Padres y familias de Maryland](#) (2021)