Special Education

Child Find and How to Refer – Age 3-21

What is Child Find?



Child Find is a mandate that requires 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 disability is, who need special education and related services, need 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. It also includes 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 for school aged children. For school aged children, you may be told to 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."

Anyone can make a referral, including parents, doctors, teachers, or a social service provider. Numbers for local Child Find contacts are on the next page; however, **referrals should be made in writing, either by letter or email.**

What happens after I make a referral?

1. You will be contacted by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Facilitator or other school staff member to schedule a screening meeting. In the screening meeting, the team will review all information about your child including any information you give them from doctors, childcare providers, or teachers. You may be asked to bring your child to the meeting.
2. When evaluations are done, the team (including you) will meet to talk about the results and decide your child's eligibility for special education and related services.
3. **If eligible**, the team will develop an IEP for your child. The legal standard is whether your child, **because of the disability**, needs special education and related services in order to make meaningful educational progress. If they do not need special education, they may be eligible for a Section 504 Plan.



A child does not automatically qualify for special education services just because they have a disability!

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	**301-618-8300**
Queen Anne's County	**410-758-2403 ext.131**
Somerset County	**410-623-2037**
St. Mary's County	**301-475-5511 ext. 32223**
Tabolt 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)