

# *Child Find Procedures*



*Memphis Shelby County Schools  
Department of Exceptional Education*



## **Child Find**

Memphis Shelby County Schools (MSCS) ensures that all children with disabilities, including children with disabilities who are homeless, wards of the State, attending private schools or who are home schooled within their geographic area, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated.

### **Child Find Procedures**

Memphis Shelby County Schools informs the general public and parents of the availability of special education services for students ages 3 through 21 years and how to access those services, including information regarding TEIS early intervention services for children ages birth through 2 years.

### **Awareness and Outreach**

Awareness of special education services, including evaluation and identification, is facilitated through the following:

- Letters to parents
- Radio and television “Public Service Announcements”
- Newspaper ads
- Posters
- Brochures
- Video technology
- District web site
- Dissemination of information at community events
- Presentations to professional, civic, and community organizations

In addition, ongoing and continuing development of relationships with community partners opens doors for partnering on child find initiatives, heightens awareness of available services, and promotes discussion of student and community needs. Partnerships are maintained across community sectors and grade bands including: The Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS), Early Head Start/Head Start, Voluntary PreK, Department of Children’s Services (DCS), Public health departments, Private schools and childcare centers, local universities, and neighboring school districts.

The school’s responsibilities for child find applies to the families and students attending and enrolling in the school. The Department of Exceptional Education develops and ensures there is a process in place for school staff members for referring students who may require special services. Written guidelines for referral and presentations are provided to Professional School

Counselors and presentations are conducted for school staff during faculty meetings throughout the school year.

### **Identifying and Serving Students Enrolling in the School**

All schools are responsible for having procedures in place to identify and promptly serve students, who require or may need special services, when they enroll in the school. As part of the registration process, parents complete a demographic form which includes a section for reporting participation in special education services.

If a student transfers to MSCS with an IEP from another school district in Tennessee, MSCS will provide comparable services in consultation with the parents pending a MSCS review IEP. MSCS will hold a review of the IEP within 30 days of the student's enrollment to determine recommendations for special education services.

If a student transfers into MSCS from another state, MSCS will provide comparable services, in consultation with the parents, until a re-evaluation meeting is held to determine if, based on evaluation from the previous district, the student meets Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) criteria for eligibility. If additional evaluation is needed to determine eligibility, an evaluation is conducted. Results are reviewed no later than permission to evaluate and, if needed, a new IEP is developed. Although a re-evaluation summary packet is generated, the 60-day eligibility timeframe is followed.

### **Referring Students for a Special Education Evaluation**

Any person who believes that a student has or may have a disability and requires special education and related services may make a formal request for a special education assessment.

**Preschool:** Many referrals are received through the Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS). A parent can refer a child who is approaching age three, or a child aged three to five who is not enrolled in a District preschool program, to the Colonial Hearing, Speech, and Vision Center. If the child is currently in a school-based, District preschool program, the referral is processed through the school team.

**Private School:** Referrals for special education evaluations for students placed by the parent in a private school, are processed through the MSCS Department of Exceptional Education and Health Services (DECHS) Private School Office.

**Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade:** If a request for a special education evaluation is made by a parent/guardian, the Professional School Counselor (PSC) discusses the parent's concerns and asks for a request in writing. The PSC assists in securing vision and hearing screening for the student through MSCS, gathers relevant background and school performance, and completes a referral form for the School Psychologist. A Student Support Team (S-Team) meeting is scheduled to discuss

parent and school concerns, with a team decision about suspected disability and consent for evaluation.

School personnel may also refer a student to the PSC for consideration of S-Team referral. The PSC explores prior interventions that have been implemented to help the student. If no interventions have been attempted, a student review team meets to assist the teacher in developing and implementing a plan. School concerns are discussed with the School Psychologist and parent and if the interventions are not successful, the S-Team process is followed.

**Gifted & Talented Students:** There are multiple ways to refer students to determine identification of talented and gifted eligibility and appropriate services. According to the Tennessee Department of Education, a parent or a school district employee may refer a child for an evaluation to determine if the child has a disability. If a student is suspected of having an educational disability at any time, they may be referred by the/an:

- Student's general education teacher, primary CLUE teacher, or another assigned teacher
- Parent, other family member, or the student themselves
- School or District Staff
- Outside source requesting an initial comprehensive evaluation

Students in PK-2 are screened following the above protocols, as standardized test scores are not available for students until their third-grade year. Students in grades 3-12 who score 90% or higher on fall, winter, or spring benchmark assessments, or who score 90% or higher on annual state testing, are identified for universal screening. This process includes contacting the parent or guardian and teachers of the student, obtaining completed TDOE gifted checklists, and providing a Response to Screening Form to parents, which is uploaded into EasyIEP. If screening indicates a need for further testing, then parental consent is obtained for a comprehensive evaluation, which includes cognitive testing, by a school psychologist.