The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has developed this voluntary Child Find Self-Assessment (CFSA) as a tool for States and local educational agencies (LEAs) to assess their Child Find system under section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Section 619 of IDEA authorizes a preschool formula grant for a State that is eligible under section 612 of IDEA and that makes available a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children with disabilities ages three through five residing in the State. Providing preschool services to children with disabilities is not mandatory; however, all States have opted to provide such preschool services.

The 619 CFSA tool supports State and local programs in determining their Child Find system’s effectiveness to identify and locate all children ages three through five who have disabilities or are suspected of having disabilities who are served under their State’s Part B system. It is important to note that, although child find includes identification, location, and evaluation activities, this CFSA tool is intended to cover only the identification and location – not evaluation – of children with disabilities.

Additionally, States and LEAs can utilize the CFSA as a monitoring tool to ensure they have met the regulatory components of a comprehensive Child Find system, and as an information tool to assist with implementing best practices for Child Find.

**What is Child Find?**

Child Find is a legal requirement under the IDEA. States and LEAs must have a process of identifying, locating, and evaluating, as soon as possible, children birth through twenty-one who may have disabilities or are suspected to have disabilities and may be in need of special education and related services. (As noted above, this CFSA tool covers only the identification and location, not evaluation, of children with disabilities). Under section 619(a)(2) of the IDEA and 34 C.F.R. § 300.800(b), it is the State’s discretion to provide special education and related services to two-year-old children with disabilities who will turn three during the school year.

**How is the CFSA organized?**

The CFSA is organized into the following four separate sections: 1) regulatory requirements that apply to child find; 2) child find best practices; 3) technical assistance tools and resources; and 4) OSEP policy letters and guidance that are relevant to Child Find.

***Child Find Section I: Regulatory Requirements Specific to Child Find.*** Section I highlights the specific requirements all States must have for a comprehensive Child Find system.

***Child Find Section II: Child Find Best Practices.*** States and LEAs can utilize Section II of this tool to evaluate the implementation of their current policies, procedures, and practices. This section includes content that is not required by the IDEA. Specifically, it highlights practices that programs or researchers have found to be beneficial for preschool special education programs in identifying and locating children with disabilities or developmental delays (as defined by the State).

***Child Find Section III: Technical Assistance (TA) and Resources.*** This section provides an overview of resources developed by OSEP-funded TA centers that are committed to improving State early intervention and early childhood special education systems to increase the implementation of effective practices and improve outcomes for children with disabilities. These TA centers have developed a wide range of research-based products, publications, and resources to assist States, local programs, and families. This section highlights resources from the TA centers and other organizations specific to child find requirements and best practices.

***Child Find Section IV: OSEP Policy Letters and Guidance.*** OSEP is charged with developing and communicating Federal policy on the IDEA. The policy letters presented in this section provide information and guidance relevant to State and local preschool child find systems.

Completion of the CFSA is voluntary. A State may choose to request technical assistance from OSEP regarding its CFSA. To request technical assistance, or ask a question about the CFSA, please send an email to your OSEP State Lead and copy the email to OSEP’s Child Find Lead -- Brenda Wilkins at Brenda.Wilkins@ed.gov. You may also call Brenda Wilkins about the CFSA at 202-245-6920. To request TA center assistance with the CFSA, contact Evelyn Shaw with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA, an OSEP-funded TA center) at evelyn.shaw@unc.edu.

**Section I: Regulatory Requirements Specific to Child Find**

*Instructions: After each question, provide information describing how the State or LEA is meeting the requirement, or the steps the State or LEA is taking to meet the requirement.*

***Child Find Requirement*** **(34 C.F.R. § 300.111(a))*.*** To ensure that your State and LEA have an effective Child Find system, it is required that your system include the following components:

1. Policies and procedures in effect to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the State,[[1]](#footnote-1) including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are 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;[[2]](#footnote-2)
2. A practical method that is developed and implemented to determine which children are currently receiving needed special education and related services.

***Use of term “developmental delay*” (34 C.F.R.** **§ 300.111(b)):**

1. If a State adopts a definition of “developmental delay” under 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b), the State determines whether the term applies to children aged three through nine, or to a subset of that age range (e.g., ages three through five).[[3]](#footnote-3)
2. A State may not require an LEA to adopt and use the term “developmental delay” for any children within its jurisdiction.
3. If an LEA uses the term “developmental delay” for children described in 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b), the LEA must conform to both the State’s definition of that term and to the age range that has been adopted by the State.
4. If a State does not adopt the term “developmental delay,” an LEA may not independently use that term as a basis for establishing a child’s eligibility under Part B of the IDEA.

***Other children in child find* (34 C.F.R. § 300.111(c)):** Child find also must include:

1. Children who are suspected of being a child with a disability under 34 C.F.R. § 300.8 and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade; and
2. Highly mobile children, including migrant children.

***Construction*** **(34 C.F.R. § 300.111(d)):**

1. Nothing in the Act requires that children be classified by their disability so long as each child who has a disability that is listed in § 300.8 and who, by reason of that disability, needs special education and related services is regarded as a child with a disability under Part B of the IDEA.

**Child Find System: 34 C.F.R. § 300.111**

**Definition of Child Find**

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| --- |
| What policies and procedures do the State and LEA currently have in place to ensure that, consistent with section 612(a)(3) of IDEA and34 C.F.R. § 300.111, all children ages three through five with disabilities are identified and located in a timely manner?[[4]](#footnote-4) |
| State Response | LEA Response |
|  |  |
| Describe how the State’s Child Find policies and procedures include children who are suspected of being a child with a disability under 34 C.F.R. § 300.8 and are in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.111(c)(1)? |
| State Response |
|  |
| Describe how the LEA’s Child Find policies and procedures include children who are suspected of being a child with a disability under 34 C.F.R. § 300.8 and are in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.111(c)(1)? |
| LEA Response |
|  |
| How do the State’s Child Find policies and procedures ensure that highly mobile children, including migrant children, are appropriately identified and located, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.111(c)(2)??  |
| State Response |
|  |
| How do the LEA’s Child Find policies and procedures ensure that highly mobile children, including migrant children, are appropriately identified and located, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.111(c)(2)??  |
| LEA Response |
|  |

**Use of term “developmental delay”:**

|  |
| --- |
| Has your State adopted a definition of “developmental delay” under 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b)? If yes, what is your State’s definition of “developmental delay”? |
| State Response |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| Has the LEA adopted a definition of developmental delay under 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b)? If yes, what is your LEA’s definition of “developmental delay”? |
| LEA Response |
|  |

**Only complete if your State has adopted a definition of “developmental delay”:**

|  |
| --- |
| Does the LEA’s definition of “developmental delay” conform to the State’s definition of that term? If not, how does the LEA’s definition differ from the State’s definition? |
| LEA Response |
|  |
| Does the LEA’s definition of “developmental delay” conform to the age range that has been adopted by the State? If not, how does the LEA’s age range differ from the State’s age range? |
| LEA Response |
|  |

**Overall**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **State** | **LEA** |
| **Strengths** | **Strengths** |
|  |  |
| **Areas for Improvement** | **Areas for Improvement** |
|  |  |

1. States and LEAs are responsible for carrying out child find obligations to all children residing within the jurisdiction. 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111 and 300.201. This includes children whose parents have chosen to homeschool them or place them in private schools, rather than enrolling them in the public schools. Generally, the LEA where the child’s parents reside is responsible for conducting child find activities, including initial evaluations and reevaluations, for children who are homeschooled. The LEA in which the private school is located is responsible for child find activities for parentally placed private school children, which could be different than where the child resides. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The child find obligation also applies to highly mobile and migrant children with disabilities, children with disabilities suspected of having developmental delays as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b) and in need of special education even though they are advancing from grade to grade, children with disabilities who have complex medical needs and who reside in nursing homes because of serious health problems, children with disabilities in correctional facilities, and children with disabilities enrolled in public charter schools. 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111(a)(1)(i) and (c), 300.2(b), and 300.209. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Developmental delays are defined by the State and are focused in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development. 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The child find obligation applies to all children with disabilities residing in the jurisdiction, including children with disabilities who are homeless or are wards of the State, children with disabilities attending private schools, highly mobile and migrant children with disabilities, children with disabilities suspected of having developmental delays as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b) and in need of special education even though they are advancing from grade to grade, children with disabilities who have complex medical needs and who reside in nursing homes because of serious health problems, children with disabilities in correctional facilities, and children with disabilities enrolled in public charter schools. 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111(a)(1)(i) and (c), 300.2(b), and 300.209. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)