

Child Find

AGES 0-5

August 26, 2024

Model operating procedures created by



Student Solutions

and

**Thompson
& Horton_{LLP}**
ATTORNEYS | COUNSELORS

Disclaimer: This information is provided for educational purposes only to facilitate a general understanding of the law or other regulatory matter. This information is neither an exhaustive treatment on the subject nor is this intended to substitute for the advice of an attorney or other professional advisor. Consult with your attorney or professional advisor to apply these principles to specific fact situations.

©2020 by Texas Association of School Boards, Inc.

TASB grants members/subscribers of TASB Student Solutions™ the limited right to customize this publication for internal (non-revenue generating) purposes only.

CONTENTS

AGES 0-5.....	1
What is Required.....	1
Noncategorical Early Childhood/Developmental Delay	1
Individualized Family Services Plan (“IFSP”) for VI and AI Students	2
Transition from ECI to Preschool Programs.....	3
Individualized Education Program (“IEP”)	3
Dual Enrollment.....	4
Definitions.....	4
Additional Procedures	5
Noncategorical Early Childhood/Developmental Delay	5
IFPS for VI and AI Students	6
Transition from ECI to Preschool Programs.....	6
Students Not Previously Served by an ECI Program	7
Dual Enrollment.....	8
Evidence of Implementation	8
Resources	12
CITATIONS	12

AGES 0-5

What is Required

The District must provide FAPE to all eligible students with disabilities ages 3 through 21. See [CHILD FIND DUTY]

District Special Education Administration must develop a system to inform parents of students from ages 3 to 5 who are eligible for enrollment in a special education program of the availability of the program. See [CHILD FIND DUTY]

Students with visual impairments, or who are deaf or hard of hearing, must have FAPE made available from birth as set out in an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for those students birth through 2 years of age and an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for those students age 3 and older. See [VISUAL IMPAIRMENT] and [DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING] and [DEAF-BLINDNESS]

Noncategorical Early Childhood/Developmental Delay

In addition to the other eligibility categories under the IDEA, students between the ages of 3 through 5 may qualify for special education services as having a noncategorical early childhood disability until the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year. See [NONCATEGORICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD]. “Noncategorical early childhood disability” may apply to a student between the ages of 3 to 5 that is evaluated as having an intellectual disability, and emotional disturbance, a specific learning disability, or autism.

Districts may, but are not required to, identify eligible students under “Developmental Delay” beginning with the 2024-2025 school year. Developmental Delay applies to a student between the ages of 3 through 9 years of age who is evaluated by a multidisciplinary team for at least one disability category under the IDEA and whose evaluation data indicator a need for special education and related services and show evidence of, but does not clearly confirm, the presence of the suspected disability(ies) due to the child’s young age. The ARD Committee may determine that data supports the identification of developmental delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development. See [DISABILITIES].

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, students may no longer be identified under the Noncategorical Early Childhood category. Any eligible student who begins the 2025-2026 school year with a Noncategorical Early Childhood eligibility can maintain eligibility; however, until the required re-evaluation before the age of 6.

Individualized Family Services Plan (“IFSP”) for VI and AI Students

An IFSP should be held in place of an ARD meeting for students from birth through two years of age with a visual impairment and/or who is deaf or hard of hearing. See [VISUAL IMPAIRMENT and DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING]. The IFSP team must include the student’s parent or guardian and other Campus and District Special Education Personnel.

The IFSP team must determine the appropriate setting for providing the services based on the student’s outcomes that are identified by the IFSP team at the IFSP meeting. Home instruction may be appropriate for students ages 0 through 2. The appropriate instructional setting for students ages 0 through 2 will be determined in accordance with the IFSP, current attendance guidelines, and the MOU between TEA and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services.

The IFSP must include:

- The student’s present levels of physical development—including vision, hearing, health status, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and adaptive development based on the information from the student’s evaluation and assessments;
- A statement about the family’s resources, priorities, and concerns relating to the student’s development;
- Expected measurable results or measurable outcomes that are developmentally appropriate for the student and the family, as well as the criteria, procedures, and timelines used to determine progress and whether modifications or revisions to the expected results or outcomes, or early intervention services, are necessary;
- Any specific early intervention services needed to meet the unique needs of the student or family, including the length, duration, frequency, intensity, and method of delivering the services;
- A statement that the early intervention services are provided in the student’s natural environment to the maximum extent possible—as well as the location of the early intervention services and payment arrangements, if any—or an explanation as to why they cannot be;
- An educational component promoting school readiness that includes pre-literacy, language, and numeracy skills (for those students ages 3 through 5 only);
- The date services will begin;
- The anticipated duration of each service; and
- The name of the service coordinator responsible for implementing the services;
- Steps and services that will be taken to encourage a smooth transition from IDEA-C services to IDEA-B services, if appropriate, or other appropriate services.

Where appropriate, the IFSP should also include:



- Any medical and other services that the student or family needs and is receiving through other sources not required or funded under Part C of IDEA; and
- Any steps that the service coordinator or family can take to help the student and family obtain such services if not currently provided.

Transition from ECI to Preschool Programs

District Special Education Personnel must ensure a smooth and effective transition for students receiving ECI services under Part C of the IDEA to preschool special education programs under Part B of the IDEA.

Unless the student with a disability's parent has notified the Health and Human Services Commission ("HHSC") in writing of the decision to opt out, the HHSC will notify District Special Education Administration not fewer than 90 days before the student's third birthday that the student will soon reach the age of eligibility under Part B of the IDEA. If a student is determined to be eligible for services under Part C of the IDEA more than 45, but less than 90, days before the student's third birthday, HHSC will notify District Special Education Administration as soon as practicable. If a student is referred for special education services under Part C of the IDEA fewer than 45 days before the student's third birthday, HHSC will obtain parental consent to refer the student to District Special Education Administration but is not required to conduct an evaluation, assessment, or initial IFSP meeting.

Notification from HHSC will abide by state policies related to confidentiality of personally identifiable information—including the ability of a parent to object to disclosure of personally identifiable information—and early intervention records. Unless a parent objects to the HHSC notification, the notification must include the student's name and date of birth, as well as contact information for the parents.

Upon approval of the family, HHSC will convene a transition conference with the family not fewer than 90 days but not more than nine (9) months before the student's third birthday to discuss whether the student will receive services under Part B of the IDEA. The transition conference may be combined with initial and annual IFSP meetings where appropriate. District Special Education Personnel will participate in transition conferences arranged by HHSC.

In the case of a student who was previously served under Part C services, District Special Education Personnel will send an invitation to the initial ARD Committee meeting at the request of the parent to the student's service coordinator of Part C services or other appropriate representatives to assist with a smooth transition.

Individualized Education Program ("IEP")

District and Campus Special Education Personnel must ensure that an IEP is implemented by the third birthday of all eligible students with disabilities. The ARD



meeting and the IEP developed at the ARD meeting must meet all requirements under state and federal law. See [ADMISSION, REVIEW, AND DISMISSAL COMMITTEE] and [PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE].

The IEP must provide special education and related services in the student's least restrictive environment. See [LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT]. The ARD Committee may agree to provide home instruction for students ages 3 through 5 if it is determined to be the student's least restrictive environment. The student's ARD Committee must determine the date services will begin for a student turning three (3) years old during the summer.

Dual Enrollment

A student ages 3 or 4 may be dually enrolled in both public and private school beginning on the student's third birthday until the end of the school year in which the student turns five or until the student is eligible to attend the District's kindergarten program, whichever comes first. If the parent of a student residing within the District chooses dual enrollment, District Service Providers must provide special education and related services to the student. See [CHILDREN IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS].

Definitions

"Individualized family service plan" or "IFSP" means a written plan for providing early intervention services to an infant or toddler with a disability and the infant's or toddler's family that is based on an evaluation and assessment, includes the content required by law, is implemented as soon as possible once parental consent for the early intervention services in the IFSP is obtained, and is developed in accordance with the procedures outlined in law.

"Private school" is a private elementary or secondary school, including any pre-school, religious school, and instructional day or residential school that is a nonprofit entity and provides elementary and secondary education that incorporates an adopted curriculum designed to meet basic educational goals, including scope and sequence of courses, and formal review and documentation of students' progress.

"Noncategorical early childhood disability" means a condition of developmental delay where a student between the ages of three to five has been identified as having an intellectual disability, an emotional disturbance, a specific learning disability or autism.

"Developmental delay" means a condition where a student between the ages of 3 and 9 is evaluated by a multidisciplinary team for at least one disability category under the IDEA and the evaluation data indicates a need for special education and related services and shows evidence of, but does not clearly confirm, the presence of the suspected disability or disabilities due to the child's young age.

Additional Procedures

At the beginning of each school year, the District must have in effect an IEP for students identified with disabilities, ages three through five. The District utilizes its child find process to locate, identify and evaluate students in the community and District who are at least three years of age, but younger than 6 years of age. See [CHILD FIND].

Noncategorical Early Childhood/Developmental Delay

Until the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year, following a referral for possible special education services for a student ages 3 through 5 or upon notice from HHSC, District Special Education Personnel will conduct an evaluation that assesses a student ages 3 to 5 [or about to turn 3] in all areas of suspected disability to determine if the student has a disability and is in need of special education and related services. See [EVALUATION PROCEDURES]. For students ages 3 to 5, the group of qualified evaluation professionals that collects or reviews evaluation data may determine that the student qualifies as noncategorical early childhood disability. See [NONCATEGORICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD]. A student may be eligible for special education services based on the noncategorical early childhood (NCEC) disability category if the student has a condition or developmental delay and meets eligibility criteria for an intellectual disability, an emotional disturbance, a specific learning disability, or autism until the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year.

If the student is identified as eligible to receive special education and related services based on a noncategorical early childhood disability, the ARD Committee will develop an IEP providing special education and related services in the student's least restrictive environment and meet annually to review and revise the plan. Noncategorical Childhood Disability eligibility may not be used after a student turns 6. Therefore, if a student is identified as eligible with a Noncategorical Early Childhood Disability, the ARD Committee will need to conduct a REED, and if formal evaluation is necessary, the student will need to be evaluated and an ARD Committee meeting held prior to age 6 to determine if the student is eligible under another disabling condition and is still in need of special education and related services.

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, a student may also be eligible for special education services based on Developmental Delay disability category if the student is:

- (1) between the ages of 3 and 9,
- (2) evaluated by a multidisciplinary team for at least one of the IDEA disability categories, and
- (3) whose evaluation data indicates a need for special education and related services and shows evidence of, but not clearly confirm, the presence of the suspected disability(ies) due to the child's young age.



A student will only be eligible for this category if the ARD Committee determines that data indicates the presence of a developmental delay in at least one of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development. The ARD Committee must also review multiple sources of data that support the presence of a developmental delay, including but not limited to performance on appropriate norm-references measures and/or multiple direct and indirect sources, such as play-based assessments, parent input and interviews, observations, work samples, etc. that demonstrate a pattern of typical development that is significantly impacting the student's performance and progress in the school setting.

The ARD Committee shall not identify any student as eligible for special education under the Noncategorical Early Childhood classification beginning the 2025-2026 school year. The ARD Committee may consider whether the student meets criteria for the Developmental Delay criteria beginning the 2024-2025 school year. Goose Creek CISD will not be using the Developmental Delay criteria until the 2025-2026 school year. If a student is already identified as a Noncategorical Early Childhood at the during the 2025-2026 school year or previously, the Ard committee shall remove the Student's Noncategorical Early Childhood eligibility following completion of the required re-evaluation before the age of 6 and determine if the Student is eligible under another category, such as Developmental Delay.

IFPS for VI and AI Students

For a student from birth through two years of age with visual impairments and/or who are deaf or hard of hearing , an individualized family services plan IFSP meeting will be held in place of an ARD Committee meeting in accordance with the law and the memorandum of understanding between the Texas Education Agency and the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services. The District will make special education services available to a student from birth to age 2 who has a visual impairment or who is deaf of hard of hearing, and whom an IFSP committee has determined to be eligible for special education services. Such a student is eligible for average daily attendance (ADA) based on the amount of time that they receive special education services.

Transition from ECI to Preschool Programs

For those students already receiving ECI services, District Special Education Administration will communicate with the HHSC regarding students that will soon reach age 3. A time will be set monthly for the ECI service provider to schedule a transition planning conference with a District Special Education representative and the parent(s) of a student served by ECI. A planning conference can occur when the student is 27 months of age, but no later than 33 months of age. If the parent(s) do not attend a Transition Planning Conference but do desire their student to transition to the District for services, the ECI agency may provide referral information data to the District Special Education Administration. The District Special Education Administration will then contact the parent in order to initiate the referral.



District Special Education Personnel will complete the student-centered process, including evaluation and ARD committee documentation. A review of existing evaluation data, timelines and referral requirements will be conducted as follows:

- The District Special Education Administration will receive referrals from an ECI agency no less than 90 days or no more than 9 months prior to the student's third birthday. When referrals are received less than 90 days before the student's third birthday, the ECI agency should provide documentation of the reason for the delay to the District.
- Special Education Administration will contact the parent to obtain the parent intake information needed for the referral, including signed parent consent to evaluate.
- An evaluation and the ARD process will be completed within the required timelines.
- The ARD Committee will determine eligibility. To ensure a smooth transition of services, District Special Education Personnel will invite the student's service coordinator of Part C services or other appropriate representatives to the initial ARD meeting if the parent requests it.
- An IEP that provides services in the least restrictive environment will be developed for students who meet eligibility requirements. The ARD Committee may provide home instruction for a student ages 3 to 5 if there is agreement that home instruction is the student's least restrictive environment.
- Eligible students who transition from Part C to Part B will receive services, as determined by the ARD Committee, beginning on or by their third birthday, with parental consent for placement.
- If an eligible student's birthday occurs during the summer, the ARD Committee will determine the date services under the IEP will begin.

Students Not Previously Served by an ECI Program

Referrals for students age 3 to 5 who have not previously received ECI services may be initiated in a variety of ways. See [CHILD FIND DUTY]. Parent/guardians, medical personnel or other concerned individuals may make a referral to the District's Special Education Department on behalf of a student who is suspected of having a disability and who is in need of special education services.

If the District is contacted about a student, ages birth through two, with a suspected developmental delay, the parent/guardian or other concerned party will be referred to an ECI program within the District attendance boundaries. For students referred between the ages of 2 years, 9 months and 5 years of age prior to September 1 of the current school year, the District will complete the referral and evaluation process in a timely manner by following the required initial evaluation timelines. See [EVALUATION PROCEDURES]. District Special Education staff members will contact the parent by phone, obtain the information required for a referral and complete the referral form. Information collected will include the parent's concerns, medical information, screening information and the results of any additional assessments the student may have been



administered. A review of referral information by the Special Education evaluation staff is utilized to identify evaluation needs. The student's case is assigned for evaluation based on the needs and the suspected area of disability (developmental, communication, atypical behavioral).

Dual Enrollment

Parents of an eligible student ages 3 or 4 may choose to be considered for a services plan or may choose to dual enroll their student in both the District and a private school beginning on the student's third birthday. The District will then be responsible for providing special education and related services to the student. The ARD Committee will develop an IEP for the student that is designed to provide the student FAPE in the least restrictive environment. The ARD Committee will determine which special education and/or related services will be provided to the student and whether the services will be provided on a District campus or at the private school. Services may be provided on the premises of a private school, including a religious private school, to the extent consistent with the law.

Unless the parent or guardian choose to end the dual enrollment period early, District Special Education Personnel will continue to provide special education and related services in the location determined by the ARD Committee until either the end of the school year in which the student turns five or when the student is eligible to attend the District's kindergarten program, whichever comes first.

The District will respond to any TEA complaint by the parent regarding the implementation of the student's IEP in dual enrollment, but the District will not be required to participate in a due process hearing related to such complaints.

If the parent chooses a services plan in lieu of dual enrollment, the student may receive limited services, as determined by representatives of the school district and private school. No parentally placed private school student with a services plan has a right to receive some or all the services the student would receive if enrolled in a District school. See [CHILDREN IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS].

The District will maintain documentation requirements of compliance associated with Texas Student Data System (TSDS), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), and State Performance Plan (SPP). District staff will provide training, with follow up, to ensure the documentation required is in place and compliant.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION (ECSE) PRESCHOOL PROGRAM TEC 29.009, ECI MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/mou/pdf/etmou.pdf>

Goose Creek CISD offers a multi-disciplinary team approach to the evaluation for children, ages 3-5, who are NOT enrolled in public school.

3 IS 3/EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION (ECI)

IDEA requires children who are identified with a disability prior to age 3 referred by Part C/Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to have an IEP developed by the child's 3rd birthday (this means ARD must be held and IEP in place prior to child's 3rd birthday). The impact of this rule on the Child Find Team and ARD Committees is as follows:

1. A child's evaluation may require completion in less time than the 45-school day timeline.
2. A child's initial ARD may have to be held in less time than 30 days from the date the Full Individual Initial Evaluation is completed.

When working with a child who is about to turn 3, the child's date of birth drives all timelines.

*Referrals received from Part C/Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) less than 90 days prior to the child's 3rd birthday do not apply and will follow regular referral timelines.

ECI TRANSITION MEETINGS

Transition Meetings are held as requested with the ECI agencies and most are held virtually. Interpreters are available. The Coordinator for Compliance and Accountability presents an overview of the evaluation process and initial ARD meeting to the parents who attend ECI Transition Meeting.

The purposes for these meetings are to:

- Inform the parents of the transition process from ECI services to public school services.
- Describe the continuum of ECSE services that Goose Creek CISD has available.
- Describe the evaluation process.
- Describe the ARD process.
- Address any questions that the parent has regarding this transition.

After the ECI Transition Meeting, the ECI referral information is submitted to GCCISD by the ECI agency. GCCISD staff process/upload the referral information and any additional documents to the Special Programs Management (SPM)



program. The Child Find Coordinator or designee reviews the referral information and assigns to the Child Find evaluation team for completion. The FIIE must be completed, and the ARD held prior to or on the child's 3rd birthday.

Since the child is not attending school, the Child Find secretary will contact the parent to schedule the evaluation. On the morning of the scheduled evaluation, the Child Find evaluation team will obtain the following:

1. Parents will start the on-line registration to obtain a local ID if not already completed
 2. Provide the Notice of Evaluation
 3. Obtain consent for the evaluation (date stamped when received)
 4. Review and provide the Notice of Procedural Safeguards (dated February 2021) and obtain a signed receipt.
 5. Review and provide the Guide to the ARD Process and obtain a signed Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Form.
- The evaluator will enter the date of consent and upload signed copies of the consent/receipts in SPM.
 - Once the FIIE is completed in SPM, the evaluator will notify the Child Find secretary who will then either schedule an initial ARD or contact the receiving ECSE campus that will be responsible for completing the initial ARD meeting.
 - It is the evaluator's responsibility to review the FIE with the parent prior to the ARD. If the parent cannot be contacted, the team evaluator must notify the campus and plan to be present prior to the ARD meeting to review the FIIE results with parent.

* It is the responsibility of the initial team evaluator to complete the draft AU supplement, FBA, Behavior Intervention Plan and Behavior goals/objectives for the ARD if recommended.

** If additional forms need to be generated or faxed, such as a physician form or consent to release information, the Initial Evaluator will complete this task.

Referrals for Children ages 0-3 suspected of a Visual Impairment and/or Deaf or Hard of Hearing

When a child from birth to age three with a suspected or documented visual impairment (VI) is referred to an early intervention team, the teacher of students with visual impairment (TVI), and certified orientation & mobility specialist (COMS) are considered members of the interdisciplinary team. When a child from birth to age three with a suspected or documented hearing loss is referred to an early intervention team,



the teacher of the deaf or hard of hearing (TODHH) is considered a member of this interdisciplinary team. Parental consent is required for ECI and the LEA to share information. With parental consent, a TVI or TODHH may be consulted for ways to obtain the required medical documentation leading to a full referral. Consultation may include phone calls, emails and/or home visits, if necessary. ECI must provide case management services for students with auditory impairment (AI) or VI. An IFSP meeting will be held in place of an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting.

REFERRALS (NOT FROM ECI) AGES 3-5

Children ages 3-5 who are not enrolled in GCCISD go through the Special Education Child Find intake process. When a parent contacts a campus and wants their 3-5 year old child referred for a Full Individual and Initial Evaluation for special education, the campus should direct the parent to call the Child Find secretary at 281-707-3567. *Children with disabilities cannot begin attending GCCISD until their 3rd birthday or at the date designated by an ARD committee.

When a parent/guardian calls the Child Find secretary, the secretary collects information including parent name, phone/email, child name/birthdate, and address. The staff member will verify the child's address/home campus and will send the parent the Child Find Intake Packet. The parent will return this packet prior to scheduling their child's intake appointment.

*Once a student enrolls in Prekindergarten or Kindergarten, and the student is suspected of having a disability, the campus based initial evaluation procedures are followed. Campuses **must** enroll students with suspected disabilities rather than deferring enrollment contingent upon referring the student to the Special Education Child Find department.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - HEAD START AGENCIES

Head Start agencies are federally funded programs. (They are not considered a private school.) Students attending Head Start who are not enrolled in a GCCISD school who are suspected of having a disability may be referred to the GCCISD Child Find department for an Full Initial Individual Evaluation.

Eligibility for this program includes:

- Age birth to 5
- Low income
- Foster children (regardless of income)

10% of the total enrollment is made available to children w/ disabilities



Evidence of Implementation

- ARD/IEP
- Individualized Family Service Plan
- Communications/Meetings with HHSC
- HHSC Notification to Parent or Guardian
- Written Consent for Initial Evaluation
- Evidence of Consultation with Private School Representatives
- Individualized Services Plan
- Documentation of Services Provided to Students Participating in Dual Enrollment
- Documentation of Child Find Efforts
- Initial FIE
- Documentation for the state in TSDS, PEIMS, and SPP
- Documentation in Special Programs Management (SPM)
- Child Find Intake Packet

Resources

[The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Ages 0-5 - Region 18](#)

[Early Childhood Intervention Services - Texas Health and Human Services](#)

[Guidance on Parentally Placed Private School Children with Disabilities - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Early Childhood Special Education \(ECSE\) - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Key Elements of Early Transition - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Early Transition Memorandum of Understanding - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Transition from Part C to Preschool - Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#)

[Questions and Answers on Response to Intervention and Early Intervening Services \(January 2007\) - U.S. Department of Education](#)

[A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education | Texas SPED Support](#)

[Student Attendance Accounting Handbook – Texas Education Agency](#)

CITATIONS

Board Policy EHB; Board Policy EHBA; Board Policy EHBAC; 20 U.S.C. 1436; 34 CFR 300.101, 300.124, 300.24, 300.344, 303.126, 303.13, 303.20, 303.209, 303.26, 303.321, 303.344, 303.420; Texas Education Code 29.009; 19 TAC 89.1035, 89.1050(b), 89.1096, 89.63(c)–(d); Texas Government Code 29.003, 392.002