


**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES
JUVENILE INSTITUTIONS**

Subject: Special Education: Child Find	Policy Number: 5
Number of Pages: 10	Section: XII
Attachments Special Education Referral Form A. Educational Screening Form B. Special Education Referral Form C. Child Find Request Form D. Tier I intervention Form E. Tier II Intervention Form F. Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) Documentation Form	Related Standards & References <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendment of 2004 (IDEA '04) and Regulations • Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Special Education Policies (2013) • Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Special Education Procedures (2016) • State Board Policy Chapter 74, Rule 7419 • Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 • State Board Policy Part 3 Chapter 41; Interventions
Effective Date: 06/09/2006, Reviewed 10/06/08, 12/15/10, 06/09/14, Revised 02/01/2017	Approved:  James V. Maccarone, Director

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services (MDHS/DYS) to ensure that all students within its jurisdiction suspected of having a disability are identified and evaluated for special education and related services. These requirements apply to highly mobile children with disabilities and children who are suspected of having a disability and may be in need of special education though they are advancing from grade to grade.

II. DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy, the following definitions apply:

A. Child Find – Each public agency is responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating all children with disabilities from birth through twenty-one (21) years of age.

This requirement applies to, but is not limited to:

- Highly mobile children, such as migrant and homeless children;
- Children who are not enrolled in school but who have not yet graduated;

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- Children who are wards of the State;
- Children with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in private or parochial elementary and secondary schools;
- Children who are enrolled in public educational programs, such as Head Start;
- Children who are suspected of having a disability and may be in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade; and
- Children who are ages birth to three (3), including those receiving Part C services through the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) Early Intervention Programs (EIP), known as First Steps.

B. Multi-Tiered Systems Support (MTSS) - MTSS provides guidance on appropriate interventions, data collections, data based decision making, evaluation, and progress monitoring for students in supplementary and/or intensive academic and behavioral supports to ensure all students graduate school college and career ready. MTSS also will accelerate and maximize student academic and behavior outcomes through the application of collaborative data based problem solving utilized by effective leadership at all levels of the educational system.

III. PROCEDURE

The MDHS/DYS facility education programs use an ongoing system to locate, identify and evaluate all youth suspected of being eligible for special education services.

A. Locate through the admissions process

1. Self-identify – For students who self-identify during the admissions process, educational staff must verify the disability and level of service through contact with the student’s sending school and place the student into the education program based on type and level of service as outlined in an existing IEP.
2. Records review – For students discovered through a records review, educational staff must verify the disability and level of service through contact with the student’s sending school and place the student into the education program based on type and level of service as outlined in an existing IEP.

B. Locate through the MTSS process

1. Students who fail to adequately respond to the Tier III Intervention Plan are identified and referred for evaluation for special education services using the Special Education Referral Form.
2. To document compliance with the requirement that students are referred for special education services evaluation through the MTSS, the following information must be part of the student’s record:
 - a. Student’s name;
 - b. Names of MTSS members reviewing the referral;
 - c. MTSS meeting dates;
 - d. Identification of student’s needs;
 - e. Record of assessments including vision and hearing screening results; and,
 - f. MTSS education plan that includes a description of intervention strategies, follow-up results.

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C. Locate through the referral process

1. Teachers, facility staff, parents/legal guardians, and the student can make a direct referral for evaluation for special education services using the Special Education Referral Form.
2. Education staff shall ensure that special education referrals from parents, teachers, and others are directed to appropriate special education staff.

D. School program responsibilities

1. The school secretary will post notices in common areas of the school and the facility regarding the Child Find Procedures.
1. The principal or designee will ensure that MDHS/DYS staff is knowledgeable of the characteristics of disabilities and appropriate referral of students suspected of having disabilities.

Within 14 days of a referral, MDHS/DYS educational staff will conduct a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) meeting composed of the parent, the child (if appropriate), and qualified professionals to review the request including all pertinent existing documentation. At the MET meeting a determination will be made whether to evaluate the student who is suspected of having a disability.

MDHS/DYS educational staff shall collaborate with the student's district of residence in the evaluation process by requesting educational records and assist in determining the educational needs of the students.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET)

The public agency must assemble a MET to respond to requests for comprehensive evaluations for children identified through Child Find activities, referrals, requests from parents, teachers, Teacher Support Teams (TST), and other individuals knowledgeable about the child.

Each MET is responsible for:

- Determining if the child is in need of a comprehensive evaluation;
- Designing the comprehensive evaluation; and
- Determining if the child meets eligibility criteria for special education and related services.

MET Membership

The MET must include input from parents and collect, analyze, and interpret information to make an informed decision about the eligibility of a child for special education and related services. Depending upon the requirements of the specific evaluation and the nature of the child's suspected disability, many different people may be members of the MET. The MET must consist of the parents or guardians designated to make educational decisions for the child (unless they choose not to participate), qualified professionals from the list below who can administer individual diagnostic assessments and interpret the results, a general education teacher and/or care providers with direct knowledge of the child. It is recommended a MET Chairperson who can allocate school resources for the evaluation and resolve disagreements in eligibility determination decisions be included as needed.

Qualified professionals who are a part of the MET may include:

- **Regular Education Teachers** who have knowledge of the child, general curriculum, and Tiered Intervention supports;

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- **Special Education Teachers** who have knowledge of disabilities and educational programming needs and who can conduct educational assessments;
- **Speech-Language Pathologists** who have knowledge of typical and atypical language and speech development and impairments and who can conduct speech, language, fluency, and/or voice assessments;
- **Speech Therapists** who have knowledge of typical and atypical speech development and impairments and who can conduct speech assessments;
- **School Psychologists** who have knowledge of typical and atypical development, education, interventions, and disabilities and who can conduct cognitive, academic, adaptive, social-emotional, and behavioral assessments, interviews, and observations;
- **Psychometrists** who have knowledge of human development and the administration of formal assessments and, depending upon their specialized training, who can conduct cognitive, academic, adaptive, social-emotional, and behavioral assessments, interviews, and observations;
- **School Health Nurses** who have knowledge of physical development, health, and impairments and who can conduct health screenings and orofacial examinations;
- **School Counselors** who have knowledge of typical and atypical social-emotional and occupational development and, depending upon their specialized training, who can conduct child and family interviews, educational/occupational assessments, and child observations;
- **School Social Workers** who have knowledge of typical and atypical social functioning and family systems and who can conduct child and family interviews, adaptive assessments and environmental observations; or
- **Representatives of other agencies and/or additional examiners** as needed, such as Audiologists, Physical Therapists, Physicians/Nurse Practitioners, Psychiatrists, Occupational Therapists, Ophthalmologist/Optometrists, or Rehabilitation Specialists.
- **Behavior Specialists** who has knowledge of and provides specialized behavioral assessments and treatment interventions.

The *MET Documentation Form* (Appendix CF.H), or a similar form, may be used to document any MET meetings or decisions.

Determining the Need for an Initial Evaluation

When a parent, public agency representative, TST member, or other individual knowledgeable about the child makes a verbal or written request for an evaluation of a child, the public agency will assemble a MET to consider the request and determine the need for conducting a comprehensive evaluation. The public agency should have procedures for documenting verbal requests, as well as the process for handling any requests when school is not in session. **The public agency must ensure that requests for evaluations and responses to those requests are not limited by the number per year or the time of year the requests are received.**

The MET must meet within fourteen (14) days of receiving the request to consider the request and review any pertinent documentation and existing data. The public agency must invite the parent and others knowledgeable of the child to participate in the meeting. The MET must invite the parent to participate in the meeting. Parental consent is not required for the review of existing data (e.g., existing teacher or related service provider observations, ongoing classroom assessments, criterion-referenced tests that are used to determine child progress, administration of tests or other assessments that are administered to all children, or screening by teachers or specialists to determine

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appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation) to determine the need for a comprehensive evaluation.

Based on this review, the MET will either determine:

- There is sufficient evidence to suspect that the child may have a disability; or
- There is insufficient evidence to suspect that the child may have a disability.

NOTE: The standard of “suspecting a child may have a disability” is an intentionally low threshold to ensure that all children who may—but not necessarily will—qualify for special education services are provided a comprehensive evaluation. The intention is to prevent under-identification, as well as over-identification, of children with disabilities who need special education and related services. The MET should not attempt to pre-determine whether or not a child will be eligible for special education before conducting a comprehensive evaluation.

If the MET determines there is sufficient evidence to suspect that the child may have a disability and may be in need of special education services, the MET must:

- Give the Prior Written Notice to the parent seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting to inform the parent the LEA is requesting an initial evaluation; and
- Give the Informed Parental Consent to inform the parent of the evaluation process and to secure written consent for the initial evaluation; and
- Give a copy of *Procedural Safeguards: Your Family Special Education Rights* to the parent.

If the MET determines there is insufficient evidence to suspect that the child may have a disability, the MET must:

- Give the *Prior Written Notice* to the parent within seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting to inform the parent that the LEA is declining the request for an initial evaluation and the reasons for the decision; and
- Give a copy of *Procedural Safeguards: Your Family’s Special Education Rights* to the parent with an explanation of the due process procedures that the parent may use to dispute the MET’s decision.

**Mississippi Department of Human Services/Division of Youth Services
Child Find Request**

**MDHS – DYS – Williams School
Department of Exceptional Education**