

NOTICE TO PARENTS REGARDING CHILD IDENTIFICATION, LOCATION, SCREENING & EVALUATION OF STUDENTS IN THE LAWTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT (IDEA 2004)

LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY

This notice is to inform parents of the local responsibilities of Lawton Public Schools for child identification, location, and evaluation activities to be conducted throughout the school year, in collaboration with other public agencies and community resources. Lawton Public Schools must locate and identify children with established or suspected disability conditions, regardless of the severity of the disabilities. Child identification efforts include individuals with disabilities, aged 3 through 21 years, not enrolled in school, as well as those who attend public and private schools, Head Start, State institutions, other child care or treatment facilities, and children transitioning at age 3 from Sooner Start. The requirements for child find also apply to all children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education and related services, even though they are advancing from grade to grade. Highly mobile children with disabilities, such as migrant and homeless children, must be included in child find activities. Lawton Public Schools conducts child identification, location, and evaluation activities by providing public awareness, information dissemination through cooperative efforts with local, regional, and statewide public and private entities, including coordination with the Sooner Start Early Intervention (EI) Program under Part C of the IDEA for children who will be transitioning by their 3rd birthday.

PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Lawton Public Schools conducts a variety of public awareness activities related to child find and the special education, related services, and programs for children with disabilities. These activities include this annually published legal notice in the local newspaper, Lawton Public Schools website information regarding child find and special education services, and ongoing dissemination of letters and child find posters. These public awareness activities are conducted in collaboration with parents, public agencies (i.e. Health Department, Sooner Start, Head Start, etc.), doctors/hospitals, and private schools within Lawton Public Schools' boundaries. Lawton Public Schools designates a "Child Find Coordinator" responsible to coordinate and implement public awareness and child find activities. In conducting public awareness activities for child find, Lawton Public Schools considers geographic factors, and the cultural and language diversity of the school district as they inform the public of the local child identification process. In addition, the Joint Oklahoma Information Network (JOIN), a statewide community resource directory, can be accessed by parents, schools, and other professionals to locate a variety of government services, including services for children with disabilities. JOIN can be accessed through a local 2-1-1 telephone number statewide or online.

CONFIDENTIALITY DURING CHILD FIND

Any personally identifiable information collected and maintained as part of the child identification, location, screening, referral, and evaluation process by Lawton Public Schools are subject to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Lawton Public Schools annually publishes a notice of rights concerning personally identifiable information in combination with this child find notice via a

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separate legal notice in the local newspaper. In addition to the legal notice of rights under FERPA, Lawton Public Schools website maintains this information year round. Lawton Public Schools collects “personally identifiable information” to identify, locate, screen, and evaluate children with suspected disabilities during child find. “Personally identifiable information” includes: the name of the child, the child's parent, or other family members; the address of the child; a personal identifier, such as the child's social security number or student number; or a list of personal characteristics or other information that would make it possible to identify the child with reasonable certainty.

Lawton Public Schools also maintains a record of the number of referrals, evaluations, and children identified as eligible as a child with a disability within each eligibility category, in accordance with annual child count procedures required by federal and State requirements. However, State and Federal child count data are collected and reported utilizing the identification of disability categories. The Federal child count data collection is reported to the State (OSDE) on an annual basis. The collection and use of child find data are subject to the confidentiality requirements under IDEA and FERPA. Any “personally identifiable information” collected, stored, disclosed, retained, or destroyed by Lawton Public Schools is maintained in accordance with the FERPA, IDEA, and the Policies & Procedures Manual for Special Education in Oklahoma. Parents and eligible students are afforded certain protections regarding “personally identifiable information” under FERPA & IDEA, which include the rights to:

- inspect and review the child’s education records;
- seek amendment of the child’s education records that the parents or eligible children believe to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the child’s privacy rights;
- consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the child’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA and 34 CFR § 99.31 authorized disclosure without consent; and
- file with the Family Policy Compliance Office, United States Department of Education (USDE), a complaint under 34 CFR §§ 99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by Lawton Public Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

A copy of the FERPA policy adopted by Lawton Public Schools may be obtained upon a request being made by a parent or eligible student to the local school site administrator. In addition, this legal notice is published annually in the local newspaper prior to any major identification, location, or evaluation activities conducted by Lawton Public Schools. This notice will be provided as needed in the native languages of the various population groups of the State of Oklahoma residing within the Lawton Public School district. Accommodations for other languages or means of communication will be provided by Lawton Public Schools upon request for parents or eligible young adults who have disabilities or have a primary or home language other than English. For additional information regarding Child Find activities, contact Lawton Public Schools’ Child Find Coordinator office at 2211 NW 25th St., Lawton, OK 73505, or call 580-353-0334.

SCREENING

Lawton Public Schools implements screening activities and procedures as a means of locating and identifying children who may have disabilities. Screening assists the school district in determining children who may require referrals for comprehensive evaluations. Screening activities include, but are not limited to, vision, hearing, health, and

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speech/language screening programs available to all children on a schoolwide or classroom basis; districtwide testing; and assessment scores already available from the Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP). Screening may include basic tests and activities administered to or procedures available to and used with all children in a class, grade, or school site. The Oklahoma State Department of Education-Special Education Services provides technical assistance and training to assist schools in implementation of screening activities under State and Federal requirements for IDEA. Other public and private resources may also be utilized in cooperative efforts for screening of children with suspected disabilities.

REFERRAL & EVALUATION

Lawton Public Schools has developed and maintains a comprehensive, multidisciplinary referral, evaluation, and eligibility process for the identification of children with suspected disabilities. Lawton Public Schools informs parents and school personnel of the referral and evaluation procedures utilized for children with suspected disabilities.

“Evaluation” means procedures used to determine whether a child has a disability under the special education law, IDEA, and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. Interagency referrals and other public or private resources may be utilized as appropriate; however, Lawton Public Schools retains the responsibility for ensuring the provision of timely evaluations at no cost to the parents. Interagency or intergovernmental agreements and cooperative arrangements may be used to accomplish referrals and evaluations by qualified personnel employed by other public agencies.

Referral procedures must document review of existing data to assist Lawton Public Schools, the parents, and other qualified professionals in determining what evaluation information may be necessary to determine whether the student has a disability which requires special education; present levels of performance and educational needs; and, for an eligible child, whether any modifications are needed to participate in the general curriculum and meet IEP goals. Review of data should include any efforts and considerations of interventions and services to assist and support the child's academic functioning in the general education environment or other appropriate settings for preschool aged children. These efforts might include: student support teams; mainstream assistance teams; consultation, co-teaching and collaboration models; and cooperative learning and peer tutoring. Lawton Public Schools has established General Education Pre-Referral & Data Documentation Procedures that are utilized by school-based intervention teams at each school site. These pre-referral procedures help school-based intervention teams with their efforts, interventions, and services to assist and support the academic functioning of children in the general education environment or other appropriate settings for preschool aged children.

Evaluation procedures may include a variety of assessment tools, strategies, technically sound instruments, and procedures used in accordance with IDEA to determine whether a child qualifies as a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child. The term “evaluation,” for child find and special education purposes, means procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not include basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

Written parent consent is required for an initial evaluation to determine eligibility for special education and related services. Parental consent for evaluation shall not be

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construed as consent for initial provision of special education and related services. As part of this consent, the parent must be given a description of the evaluation procedures the school district proposes to use as a basis for determining whether a child has a disability and whether special education and related services are needed. Parent consent is not required to administer a test or other evaluation (e.g., districtwide assessments) that is administered to all children if consent would not be required of all children's parents.

CHILD FIND CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information regarding child find activities or to refer a child aged 3-21 years, with an established or suspected disability condition who may be in need of special education and related services, contact Lawton Public Schools' **Child Find Coordinator** by calling **580-353-0334** at **Special Services Center, 2211 NW 25th St., Lawton, OK 73505.**