



## Cirrus Academy Charter School Child Find Procedures

### State Board Rule 160-4-7-.03

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that the Local Education Agency locate and evaluate children, birth through age 21, who are suspected of a disability and require early intervention or special education services. Child Find is a process that includes activities that identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, birth through age 21 who are in need of early intervention or special education services. The Local Education Agency has a Child Find responsibility for all children suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This includes:

- Children, birth through 3, who may or may not be referred to and served by the state's early intervention program, Babies Can't Wait;
- Preschool children, ages 3 through 5 who may not be enrolled in a Georgia –funded prekindergarten and kindergarten, including children who are parentally placed in private preschools or daycare centers outside the district;
- Children who are enrolled in a public school within the district, including public charter schools;
- Children who are parentally placed in private and home schools or who are attending charter schools within the district;
- Highly mobile children, including migrant, homeless, and children who are wards of the state;
- Children served in community programs such as rehabilitation centers, daycare centers, etc.
- Children age 18 through 21, who are incarcerated in facilities operated by the local sheriff's office or other municipalities;
- Any other children suspected of having disabilities.

### Purpose

The Cirrus Academy Charter School serves children in grades K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade with identified special educational needs. The purpose of Child Find and the screening process is to fulfill a school district's obligation to ensure that all children who are eligible for special education and related services are identified, located and evaluated. "Child Find" includes the following:

- The various child find activities that must be conducted to ensure that all children eligible for special education are located.
- The annual notice that school districts are required to disseminate.
- Information about equitable participation for children eligible for special education services who are placed in private schools by their parents.

IDEA 2004 requires that local education agencies (LEA) ensure that all children in need of special education services within their regions are located, identified, and evaluated. Children who are homeless, highly mobile, are wards of the State, detained or incarcerated in jails or correctional facilities, or are parentally –placed in private schools (including religious, elementary and secondary schools) or home school/study programs, regardless of the severity of their disability, are included in the child find activities. The LEA is mandated to locate and identify those students who are in need of special education services and to provide them the opportunity to benefit from special education services.

Cirrus Academy Charter School implements Child Find procedures in an effort to locate, screen, and evaluate children with suspected disabilities. The system will develop and offer specialized instruction through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Service Plan if a student is found to be eligible for services.

#### Procedures

Cirrus Academy Charter School conducts a thorough and complete child find process to determine the number of parentally placed children with disabilities attending private schools located in the school districts.

Children with disabilities in home school programs in Georgia are considered to be “students with disabilities placed by their parents in private school.” Cirrus Academy Charter School meets annually with representatives from home schools and private schools in the fall and spring of each year to educate them on the School’s Child Find procedures. Parents of children in home-school programs, daycare representatives, and Head Start are invited to the same communication, child find activities, and special services provided to students in private schools.

In Cirrus Academy Charter School, a referral may be made by anyone who has a concern about a child’s development. All referrals are considered confidential. (The parent retains the right to refuse services.) Children may be referred by any of the following:

- Parents/legal guardians/foster parents
- Other family members
- Physicians/health care providers
- Preschool programs
- School system personnel
- Community agencies
- Private School personnel
- Others who are concerned about a child’s development

Prior to any possible referral to special education, the screening of children by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation will not be considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services, but will aid in the decision making process.

A child should be referred when:

- A health or medical disorder interferes with development or learning
- A child seems to have difficulty seeing or hearing
- A child appears to have social, emotional or behavioral difficulties that affect his/her ability to learn.
- A child has diagnosed progressive or generative conditions that will eventually impair or impede the child’s ability to learn.
- A child seems to have difficulty understanding directions like other that are his/her age.
- A child’s speech is not understandable to family or friends.
- A child has difficulty with reading, math, and other school subjects.

As described in the Student Support Team section of these guidelines and in the Georgia Department of Education ‘s Response to Intervention Handbook, student referrals are accompanied by documentation of scientifically researched or evidenced-based academic or behavioral interventions that demonstrate insufficient rate of progress.

Student referrals must be accompanied by documentation of scientific, research or evidence based academic and /or behavioral interventions that have been implemented as designed for the appropriate period of time to

show effect or lack of effort that demonstrates the child is not making sufficient rate of progress to meet age or State approved grade level standards within a reasonable time frame.

Exceptions may be made in circumstances where immediate evaluation and /or placement is required due to a significant disability that precludes access to instruction; however, exceptions are an infrequent and rare occurrence, and the circumstances evidencing the need for the local education agency's use of the exception will be clearly documented in the eligibility decision.

Each agency is provided information for contact with both school districts in the event a student is suspected of having a disability that requires special education and /or related services. School newsletters, flyers, district and school websites, personal contact with parents, media,(radio, newspaper, etc.) are methods that Cirrus Academy Charter School attempts to locate and identify children within the county who might require an evaluation and demonstrate a need for services.

Teachers receive training on Child Find Annually. Information presented includes the federal and state mandates, district processes and procedures, and ways teachers can assist in Child Find at school and in the community.

The funds and services provided are designated and administered by the Cirrus Academy Charter School after consultation with private and home schools. All school systems must report the number of parentally enrolled children in private/homeschools evaluated, determined to be children with disabilities, and served annually. Cirrus Academy Charter School maintains documentation of those students who are screened and evaluated due to Child Find activities.