



## Child Find

For Students Age 3-21 years

Federal law mandates that school districts are obligated to locate and evaluate all children with disabilities from ages 3-21. Either the parent/legal guardian or the school district can begin the referral process for special education. A parent/legal guardian who feels their child may have a disability can begin the process by contacting their child's school principal, their child's teacher, or the school counselor. The special education administrative staff at the district office can also aid you with the process.

Once a child is suspected as having a disability, a team is created to decide what information is required to determine if a disability exists. The team consists of the child's parent/legal guardian, the child's regular education teacher(s), a special educator, and representative of the Local Education Agency (typically the principal or counselor in the school). This team is involved in all of the following stages:

## Evaluation Process

Before entering special education, a child must be found to have a disability. There are 13 different categories under which a child can be found eligible. The team will meet to decide assessments needed for the evaluation plan. There are many documents that need to be completed as part of the special education evaluation process.

**Student Profile:** This document is created at the first stage of determining a disability. In this document, the team will record what they already know about the child and what questions remain. It is the questions that remain which will form the basis for the formal testing that needs to occur. The student profile should contain areas of strength of the child as well as areas of need. You, as the parent/legal guardian, have valuable information to bring to the table in all aspects of special education procedures and the evaluation stage is no different. By participating in this process, you are helping to create a comprehensive picture of your child. The other areas addressed in the student profile are: cognitive functioning, academic performance, communication status, physical characteristics, emotional and social development, adaptive characteristics, and home and community factors. The determination of special education cannot be made by one individual. For this reason, your child's evaluation will have more than one person conducting assessments.



**Consent for Evaluation:** The student profile is considered to be part of the evaluation process. A parent/legal guardian signature will be required at the start of the student profile meeting prior to formally evaluating the child. A team has 60 calendar days to complete the evaluation from the date the parent/legal guardian signed consent for the evaluation process. A parent/legal guardian can revoke consent for evaluation at any time which would terminate the evaluation process.

**Assessment Plan:** The team will decide which formal and informal assessments need to be completed to answer questions that were raised in the student profile. For an initial determination for special education, there must be more than one person conducting the evaluation and more than one assessment needs to be utilized.

**Integrated Written Assessment Report (IWAR):** After formal assessment has been completed, the team will reconvene to discuss the results. The results, along with other pertinent information from the team, will be placed into a written report. The team must determine if the child has a disability according to North Dakota guidelines. If the child meets the criteria of at least one disability area, the team must then show that the disability has both an adverse effect on the child's education and that the child requires specialized instruction in order to qualify for special education programming.

**Consent for Initial Placement:** A parent/legal guardian signature must be obtained before a child may begin receiving special education services. The parent/legal guardian has the right to agree to or deny placement in special education. If a parent/legal guardian agrees to placement, the team has 30 days from the date of the IWAR to meet in order to create the Individualized Education Program document also known as the IEP.