

## **PROJECT CHILD FIND**

Project Child Find is a component of **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** that requires states to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, age birth to 21, who are in need of special education services. To receive Special Education, children must meet eligibility guidelines according to the IDEA.

In addition to special education services for children with disabilities, The State of New Jersey provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers who are at risk of developmental delay through Project Child Find. Project Child Find includes: assisting families of infants, birth through two who require early intervention due to concerns of a child's development; assisting families of preschoolers 3-5 with possible developmental concerns by directing concerns to LEA; assisting families' access community resources; providing information to the community about children with disabilities; assisting local school districts to identify children ages 3-21 who may be in need of special services.

Information regarding Project Child Find may be obtained by calling 1-888-653-4463 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Pemberton Township School District conducts specific activities for the purposes of locating, evaluating and identifying students ages birth to twenty-one with suspected disabilities and who reside within the district's boundaries. This includes students attending private schools. Early identification of disabilities assists parents, students and schools in the design of appropriate educational services.

If your child is a preschooler and you have concerns about his or her development, you are encouraged to take advantage of this free service, especially if you have questions and concerns regarding your child's development. If your child will be entering a kindergarten program next year, and you have particular concerns in any of these areas, the screening is especially advised.

If your child is in school and you believe a disability may impair his or her educational performance, please contact your child's teacher for more information about getting your child evaluated. If your child is not attending school, please contact Holly Corsanico, Supervisor of CST, at 609-893-8141, ext. 2033 to schedule a Child Find screening.

### **Child Find Process**

**Preschool children:** If you are aware of a preschooler, from 3-5 years old, who has or may have a developmental disability, please call Deborah Ceplo, Principal/Assistant Director of Early Childhood at 609-893-8141, ext. 1503 to arrange for an appointment and screening.

After the screening, one of two things will happen:

1. For some children, their screenings will indicate that a full developmental assessment to determine eligibility for special education services is not necessary. In this case, parents

will be provided with community resources and home program suggestions to strengthen any areas of minor weakness.

2. Other children, for which the screening determines that future assessment is required, will then be referred on to a formal more in-depth evaluation. This evaluation will determine if a child is eligible to attend Pemberton Township's developmental preschool program for children with special needs.

For general questions regarding Early Childhood Education, please call Deborah Ceplo, Principal/Assistant Director of Early Childhood, at 609-893-8141, ext. 1503.

#### How Do I Access These Services?

- Preschool children residing in Pemberton Township who are not enrolled in a preschool program may be referred directly to the office of Early Childhood by calling Marlene O'Brien, Secretary to the Principal/Assistant Director of Early Childhood at 609-893-8141, ext. 1500.
- Children enrolled in Pemberton Township Schools who are suspected of having a disability and may be in need of special education are referred directly for screening by contacting the Office of Special Services at 609-893-8141 extension 1012.
- Children ages 3-21 enrolled in a New Jersey Department of Education approved private/parochial school located in Burlington County may be referred for screening by contacting the Office of Special Services at 609-893-8141 extension 1012.

#### Who May Refer a Child?

Most referrals are made directly by a child's parents. Referrals (with parental consent) are made by health care providers, social workers, child care providers, and other individuals familiar with the child's development.

#### What is the Cost?

Screening services are available at no charge to children who reside within Pemberton Township. If necessary, assessments, evaluations, and all special education services, including transportation, which are determined to be necessary are provided free of charge.