Child Find Policy

This notice contains the Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative (NEISEC) procedures for special education child find.

Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative Child Find Assurances:

1. Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative takes the responsibility of establishing, maintaining, and implementing written procedures that ensure the location, identification, and evaluation of all students three (3) years of age, but less than twenty-two (22) years of age, who are in need of special education and related services, regardless of severity of their disabilities including children who:
    a. Have legal settlement within the jurisdiction of the Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative catchment area.
    b. Attend a nonpublic school, are served by an agency, or live in an institution within the Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative catchment area.
    c. Are homeless.
    d. Are wards of the state of Indiana.
    e. Are highly mobile, including migrants.
    f. Are suspected of being students with disabilities in need of special education even though they are advancing from grade to grade.

Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative Child Find Activities:

1. NEISEC and its member school corporations make Child Find and referral information publicly available through district and/or NEISEC websites and other appropriate communication methods.
2. NEISEC collaborates with member school corporations, families, community preschools and childcare providers, and other community agencies regarding Child Find and referrals.
3. NEISEC provides referral information and resources to community partners serving children and families within DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble, and Steuben Counties.
4. NEISEC and its member school corporations provide information about how parents and school personnel may request an educational evaluation when a disability is suspected.

NEISEC Child Find, Referral for Process for Special Education Services:

A student's parent or the public agency may initiate a request for an educational evaluation to determine whether the student is eligible for special education and related services. A parent's request may be made verbally or in writing to licensed personnel, including a teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, building principal, or other administrator. Although a written request is not required, a parent may choose to make the request in writing. Within ten (10) instructional days after a parent requests an educational evaluation, the public agency must provide the parent with written notice responding to the request and a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards (NOPS). The written notice must state whether the public agency proposes or refuses to conduct the evaluation and include the information required by 511 IAC 7-40-4. If the public agency proposes to evaluate, it must obtain parental consent before conducting the evaluation.

General education interventions, screening, progress monitoring, or participation in a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) may provide useful information, but they should not be used to delay an educational evaluation when an evaluation is warranted or when a parent requests an evaluation.
For children ages three (3) through five (5) who are not yet enrolled in school, families, preschool providers, childcare providers, and community agencies may contact NEISEC or the child's resident school corporation when there is a concern that the child may have a disability and may need special education and related services.

The Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative is an additional point of contact. Parents and school staff may reach out to the Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative for assistance in initiating special education by contacting:

Executive Director, Katie Yoder, kyoder@neisec.com, 260.499.1772
DeKalb County Director, Rachel Burley, rburley@neisec.com, 260.242.8804
LaGrange County Director, Jeff Radel, jradel@neisec.com, 260.349.8122
Noble County Director, Joel Luckey, jluckey@neisec.com, 260.343.1117
Steuben County Director, Ben Morgan, bmorgan@neisec.com, 260.343.1461

NEISEC Child Find, Referral for Special Education Services

Any individual (ie: parent, teacher, principal) suspecting that a child has a disability that could require special education services should contact the building principal and/or counselor to discuss options. The school may suggest the following:

- Providing additional support in the classroom before a referral to special education.
- Reviewing your child's school performance with the school's general education intervention team or building-based support team.
- Investigating your child's eligibility for a 504 plan.
- Refer your child for a special education evaluation.

Every effort will be made to assist the child at the building level before the school initiates a referral. If strategies fail, the school will seek permission for testing from the parent.

If one or more of the above options is implemented at any time before, during, or after, the parent may request an evaluation to determine whether their child may be eligible for special education services. This request should be communicated to the building principal. The school must respond with written notice to a request for an evaluation made by a parent to licensed personnel within 10 instructional days of receiving the request.

Navigating the Course is an overview and a practical resource to assist families in navigating the special education rules. Questions regarding Child Find can be directed to the Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative at 260-347-5236.

For preschool-age referrals,

If the child is preschool age (3-5), the request for testing should be directed to the Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative at 260-347-5236.