

CHILD FIND (34 C.F.R. § 300.111; 34 C.F.R. § 303.302; and 34 C.F.R. § 303.303)

Child Find is a continuous statewide effort to locate, identify, and evaluate children who may have developmental delays and need early intervention service (Part C) or Special Education (Part B) services as described in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Alabama, the Child Find Process for infants and toddlers with disabilities, birth to age 3, is coordinated through the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. In providing services and employment practices, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services does not discriminate based on race, sex, creed, national origin, religion, age, or disability. Information regarding Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) can be found at www.rehab.alabama.gov or by calling the Child Find office at 1-800-543-3098, where various public awareness brochures and AEIS's policies and procedures are available.

Early Intervention provides supports and services for infants and toddlers under the age of three who have a developmental delay or a medical diagnosis that can delay normal development, which can prevent the child from meeting developmental milestones. Early intervention supports and services focus on teaching the parents and caregivers ways to help the child learn and participate in everyday activities.

Child Find Procedures

AEIS uses a variety of strategies to ensure that children who need early intervention services are identified and evaluated. These strategies include public announcements through social media and email, meetings with private and public agencies, participation in community events, parent mentors, and collaboration with other public agencies such as the Alabama Department of Human Resources, Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Institute of Deaf and Blind, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Department of Early Childhood, and Alabama Department of Education. Our public website is also a powerful tool to provide the public with information regarding E.I. services.

How are Referrals to E.I. made?

Anyone who has concerns about any child's development, age birth to three, can make a referral to Alabama's Child Find by completing a Child Find Referral form (available at www.rehab.alabama.gov) and sending it via email or fax to AEIS Child Find or by calling the Child Find office at 1-800-543-3098. Referral sources are physicians/medical staff, parents, childcare providers, local education agencies, public and private domestic abuse/homeless shelters, and friends and family. Referrals to Child Find should be made within two days after the child has been identified as possibly needing E.I. services. AEIS works in conjunction with the Department of Human Resources to receive referrals through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). There is also a partnership with Alabama's Department of Public Health in which all children with a diagnosis of hearing impairment are automatically referred to AEIS. All referrals in Alabama are processed through the central Child Find Referral office. Once a referral is received in the Child Find office, it is entered into the data system and assigned to a District Early Intervention Coordinator (DEIC) in the district that the child resides. The DEIC contacts the family to provide and gather further information if needed and arranges for the case to be transferred to a Service Coordinator with a local program. Eligibility determination and the IFSP meeting will be scheduled and conducted, as appropriate, within the required 45-day timeline.

Who is Eligible for E.I. Services?

Infants and toddlers from birth to age three who either have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay or are experiencing a developmental delay in one or more of the following areas:

- Cognitive development
- Physical development, including vision and hearing
- Communication development
- Social or emotional development
- Adaptive development skills

Developmental Delay Definition (34 C.F.R. §§ 303.203(c), 303.10 and 303.111)

The state of Alabama has adopted the following definition of developmental delay:

Infant or toddler with a disability means an individual under three years of age who needs early intervention services because the individual—

(1) Is experiencing a developmental delay equal to or greater than 25%, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas:

(i) Cognitive development.

(ii) Physical development, including vision and hearing.

(iii) Communication development.

(iv) Social or emotional development.

(v) Adaptive development; or

(2) Has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that—

(i) Has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay; and

(ii) Includes conditions such as chromosomal abnormalities; genetic or congenital disorders; sensory impairments; inborn errors of metabolism; disorders reflecting disturbance of the development of the nervous system; congenital infections; severe attachment disorders; and disorders secondary to exposure to toxic substances, including fetal alcohol syndrome.

Other children “at risk” for developmental delay are not included in this definition.

The state of Alabama has developed procedures to determine eligibility described in the Evaluation & Assessment policy on our public website.