PACE Academy
Child Find Policy and Procedures

Purpose

PACE Academy is committed to ensuring that all children with disabilities residing within our service area, including those attending private schools, highly mobile children, migrant students, and children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and South Carolina Department of Education regulations.

The purpose of Child Find is to ensure that children with disabilities are provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and that no child is overlooked in the process of identification and evaluation.

Legal Authority

PACE Academy implements Child Find in compliance with:
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.
- South Carolina State Board of Education Regulations (S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-243, 43-243.1).
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Scope

Child Find applies to all children ages 3 through 21 who reside within the geographic boundaries served by PACE Academy, including but not limited to:
- Children enrolled in PACE Academy.
- Children who are homeschooled or enrolled in private schools within the jurisdiction.
- Children who are migrant, homeless, or wards of the state.
- Children who are suspected of having a disability, even if they are advancing from grade to grade.

Identification Activities

PACE Academy will engage in a continuous effort to inform the public and staff about the availability of services through Child Find. Activities include:
1. Annual Public Notice – Posting on the school's website, parent handbooks, newsletters, and local community outlets to inform families about Child Find procedures.
2. Collaboration – Working with local agencies, healthcare providers, and early intervention

programs to identify students who may need special education services.
3. Staff Training – Providing annual training for teachers, administrators, and support staff on recognizing indicators of potential disabilities.
4. Community Outreach – Conducting information sessions and distributing brochures/flyers within the community to increase awareness.

Referral Process

1. Initiation – Any parent, teacher, or concerned individual may make a referral for evaluation if a child is suspected of having a disability.
2. Written Referral – Referrals must be submitted in writing to the school's Special Education Coordinator or designated Child Find contact.
3. Parental Notification – Parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the referral and their rights under IDEA and Section 504.
4. Consent for Evaluation – No evaluation may begin without written parental consent.

Evaluation Procedures

- Evaluations are conducted by qualified personnel in accordance with federal and state regulations.
- Evaluations are comprehensive and assess all areas of suspected disability.
- Evaluations must be completed within 60 calendar days of receiving parental consent, unless otherwise specified by South Carolina regulations.
- Parents will receive written notice of evaluation results and eligibility determination.

Eligibility and Services

Following evaluation, an eligibility determination meeting will be held with parents and the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team. If the child is found eligible for special education services, an IEP will be developed to ensure provision of FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

For students not eligible under IDEA, consideration for accommodations under Section 504 will be provided.

Parent and Community Rights

Parents and guardians have the right to:
- Participate in all meetings regarding identification, evaluation, and placement.
- Provide or deny consent for evaluation and services.
- Receive copies of all reports and notices in understandable language.
- Access dispute resolution procedures, including mediation and due process hearings, if disagreements arise.

Confidentiality

All student records and information obtained through Child Find are confidential and protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and IDEA confidentiality provisions.

Contact Information

For additional information or to make a referral, please contact:

Kailey Mitchell
Special Education Coordinator
(803)-251-9138
Kailey.Mitchell@choosepace.org