

Notice of Special Education Services and Programs
Child Find
Connellsville Area School District

The Connellsville Area School District, along with all school districts in Pennsylvania, and other public agencies in the Commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice is to help find these children in our district, offer assistance to parents and describe the parent's rights with regard to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during this process.

The content of this notice has been written in English. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the Connellsville Area School District (see Contacts) and request an explanation.

Identification Activity

Child find refers to activities undertaken by public education agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate children residing in the State, including children attending private schools, who are suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and determine the child's need for special education and related services. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available. The types of disabilities that if found cause a child to need services are: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment due to chronic or acute health problems, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment including blindness. In the case of a child that is of preschool age, developmental delay is a type of disability.

The Connellsville Area School District, along with other school districts in the state, is required to annually provide notice describing the *identification* activities and the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of *personally identifiable information*. This notice is intended to meet this requirement.

Identification activities are performed to find a child who is suspected as having a disability that would interfere with his or her learning unless special education programs and services are made available. These activities are sometimes called *screening* activities. The activities include: Review of group data, conducting hearing and vision screening, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior and determining the student's response to attempted remediation. Input from parents is also an information source for *identification*. After a child is identified as a suspected *child with a disability*, he or she is evaluated, but not before parents give consent for the evaluation to be conducted.

Protected Handicapped Students' Identification

In compliance with state and federal law, the Connellsville Area School District will provide to each protected handicapped student-without discrimination or cost to the student or his/her family-those related aids, services or accommodations which are necessary to provide him/her equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the students abilities.

In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the

school program. These services and protections for “protected handicapped students” are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, contact: Lisa Hampe, Chapter 15 and 504 Coordinator at 724-628-3300.

Gifted Identification/Services

The Connellsville Area School District provides services for mentally gifted students which enable them to participate in acceleration or enrichment programs, or both, as appropriate, and to receive services according to their intellectual and academic abilities and needs. The gifted support coordinators also plan a variety of enrichment opportunities and learning extensions outside of the classroom through educational trips, conferences, workshops and competitions. Students may be referred for evaluation to determine mental giftedness through a teacher or parent nomination or when their performance meets established criteria. To identify a student with mental giftedness, the district secures permission to evaluate from parents. A team comprised of district staff and parents then gather information for the evaluation which is summarized in the gifted written report (GWR) and used by the gifted individualized education program (GIEP) team to determine if the student meets criteria for mental giftedness and is in need of specially designed instruction. The GIEP team develops a program for the student.

Referral for a gifted multidisciplinary evaluation shall be made to the building principal when the student is suspected by teachers or parents as being in need of referral for a gifted evaluation. Parents who suspect that their child is gifted may request a gifted multidisciplinary evaluation of their child at any time, with a limit of one request per school term. The request must be in writing. Parents may obtain additional information regarding Gifted services for students by contacting the child’s school principal or the Supervisor of Special Education, Lisa Hampe at 724-628-3300.

Confidentiality

If after screening a disability is identified, with your permission, your child will be evaluated. A written record of the results is called an Evaluation Report, which is directly related to your child and is maintained by the Connellsville Area School District. These records are personally identifiable to your child. *Personally identifiable information* includes the child's name, the name of the child's parents or other family member, the address of the child or their family, a personal identifier such as social security and other information that would make the child's identity easily traceable.

The Connellsville Area School District will gather information regarding your child's physical, mental, emotional and health functioning through testing and assessment, observation of your child, as well as through review of any records made available to the district through your physician and other providers of services such as day care agencies.

The Connellsville Area School District protects the confidentiality of *personally identifiable information* by assigning one school official as being responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of those records. This official is responsible for training all persons using this information and for maintaining for public inspection a current list of employees’ names and positions that may have access to this information. The Connellsville Area School District will inform you when this information is no longer needed to provide educational services to your child. We will destroy this information at the request of the parent at that time, except general information such as your child's name, address, phone

number, grades, attendance record and classes attended, grade level completed, which may be maintained without time limitation.

As the parent of the child, you have a number of rights regarding the confidentiality of your child's records. The right to inspect and review any education records related to your child that are collected, maintained, or used by the Connellsville Area School District. Our district will comply with a request from you to review the records without unnecessary delay. You may also review the records before any meeting regarding planning for your child's special education program (IEP meeting) and before a hearing (should you and our school district disagree about how to educate your child who needs special education services). In no case, shall the district take more than 45 days to furnish you the opportunity to inspect and review your child's records.

You have the right to an explanation and interpretation of the records; to be provided copies of the records if failure to provide the copies would effectively prevent you from exercising your right to inspect and review the records and; the right to have a representative inspect and review the records.

Upon your request, the Connellsville Area School District will provide you a list of the types and location of education records collected, maintained, or used by the agency. The district may charge a fee to search or retrieve information.

You have the right to request the amendment of your child's education records that you believe are inaccurate or misleading, or violate the privacy or other rights of your child. The Connellsville Area School District will decide whether to amend the records within a reasonable time of receipt of your request. If the Connellsville Area School District refuses to amend the records you will be notified of the refusal and your right to a hearing. You will be given at that time, additional information regarding the hearing procedures and; upon request, the district will provide you a records hearing to challenge information in your child's education files.

Parent consent is required before *personally identifiable information* contained in your child's education records is disclosed to anyone other than officials of the school district. Specifically, those officials of our district who are collecting or using the information for purposes of identification of your child, locating your child and evaluating your child or for any other purpose of making available a free appropriate public education to your child. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Additionally, the school district, upon request, discloses records without consent to officials of another school district in which your child seeks or intends to enroll. Further information regarding the Policy of the Collection, Maintenance and Dissemination of records is available through the principal's office.

When a child reaches age 18, the rights of the parent with regard to confidentiality of *personally identifiable information* is transferred to the student.

A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
Division of Compliance
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

The Department of Education will investigate the matter, issue a report of findings and necessary corrective action within 60 days. The Department will take necessary action to ensure compliance is achieved.

Complaints alleging failures of the school district with regard to confidentiality of *personally identifiable information* may also be filed with:

*Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605*

The Connellsville Area School District will be providing ongoing screening services. If you wish to learn more, have questions, or believe your child may need to be identified, please contact:

*Lisa Hampe
Supervisor of Special Education
Connellsville Area School District
724-628-3300*

Early Intervention Identification

In Pennsylvania, a child between three years of age and the school district's age to begin school who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or mental conditions listed above is identified as an "eligible young child." The parents of these children have the same rights described above.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the Early Intervention Services System Act. Screening for preschool children is available upon request. For additional information or to schedule an appointment for screening call Barbara Rothermel, Supervisor of Early Intervention Services, Intermediate Unit 1 at 724-938-3241.