

# A Parent's Guide to the Child Find Process

"Child Find" refers to a public school's obligation to actively identify and evaluate children who may have a disability that impacts their education and who may be eligible for special education services. At Hawthorn Academy, each campus has a Child Find Team comprised of educators from a variety of grade-levels who assist in the child identification process. There are several steps to the Child Find process:

## Step One: Identification

TEACHERS work with their students, colleagues, administrators, and curriculum to provide data-driven instruction to their classes across all subject areas. When classroom data shows that a particular student is not progressing at an adequate rate when compared to his or her peers, the classroom teacher may suspect that the student has a disability.

PARENTS may notice some signs that a student could have a disability. These signs may include the student struggling year after year, even with different teachers and extra support. Their student may not be progressing as quickly as a sibling or peer, or the student may have a medical condition that is affecting his or her performance in the classroom.

ADMINISTRATORS and SPECIALISTS monitor, drill down, and review assessment data at regular intervals. Students who show a trend of low performance across multiple assessments, or whose performance is drastically different from same-aged peers, the administrator or specialist may suspect that the student has a disability.

## Step Two: At-Risk Intervention and Documentation

Regardless of who initially suspects that a student may have a disability, the student's classroom teacher and any other school personnel who work with the student will analyze the area of concern to determine specific, targeted interventions to implement for the student. For example, a student who is struggling with reading may be placed in a small group for instruction or work with a tutor. Teachers will implement at least two interventions and collect data on their efficacy for 4-6 weeks.

If the child begins to make progress once the interventions are in place, the teacher will continue with the interventions as a regular part of that student's instructional plan.

If the child has not made progress, despite the interventions being in place, the teacher will refer the student to the school's Child Find team.

## Step Three: Child Find Team Referral

For students who do not make progress despite interventions being put into place, the classroom teacher will assemble a packet for the Child Find team to review. Information about the student's demographics, academic achievement, and behavior will be included in the submittal. Additionally, the teacher will document any interventions that were put into place and data showing the student's response to those interventions. The Child Find team, which meets monthly, will analyze the submitted

data in depth and provide the teacher with recommendations moving forward. There are three possible outcomes of a child find meeting:

- 1.) The Child Find team could decide that the student is making adequate progress based on the intervention and performance data submitted. The teacher would then be instructed to continue the interventions and advise the team of any changes in the student's individual circumstances or progress;
- 2.) The Child Find team could decide that there are additional interventions that may benefit the student. The teacher would be advised of and supported in implementation of those interventions, with instructions to submit the results of those interventions at the next Child Find team meeting; or
- 3.) The Child Find team could decide that the interventions implemented were appropriate and that the data submitted supports the listed concerns. The teacher would instruct the teacher to fill out a Referral for Special Education Evaluation, and to obtain formal permission from the student's parent, to begin the special education evaluation process.

The Child Find team maintains a running record of student referrals and intervention data. If a child is referred to Child Find team multiple times, that information will be considered as part of the team's findings. Additionally, the Child Find team works with school administrators to identify students with chronically low standardized assessment scores, poor academic performance from one grade to the next, or any other situation that might warrant referral.

#### Step Four: Special Education Referral

If the Child Find team refers a child to Special Education for an evaluation, then the Special Education department will send home a Written Prior Notice and Consent for Evaluation/Re-Evaluation, which parents will be expected to sign and return to the school. The special education team will complete the assessment within **45 school days** of the return of the consent.

Once the assessment is complete, a meeting will be held between the special education teacher, general education teacher, and a member of administration to determine if the student has a disability as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and to make a plan for proceeding with the student's educational planning.