The purpose of this memo is to clarify and reinforce the responsibilities of the Local Education Agencies (LEA) with regard to Child Find for children aged birth to 3 years old. The Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) have joint responsibility for Child Find for this age group. LEAs are major stakeholders in Child Find for infants and toddlers with disabilities since the LEA will ultimately be responsible for educating these children. LEA responsibilities include public awareness, screenings, acting as a primary referral source, and Local Interagency Council membership.

Regulations:
The Federal Child Find regulations at 34 CFR 300.111 state, “The State must have in effect policies and procedures to ensure that – (i) All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated…”

The State Child Find regulations at 23 IL Adm Code 226.100 state, “a) Each school district shall be responsible for actively seeking out and identifying all children from birth through age 21 within the district (and those parentally-placed private school children for whom the district is responsible under 34 CFR 300.131) who may be eligible for special education and related services. Procedures developed to fulfill the child find responsibility shall include: 1) An annual screening of children under the age of 5 for the purpose of identifying those who may need early intervention or special education and related services…”

Public Awareness:
LEAs must conduct public awareness activities targeting families and other primary referral sources. Public awareness activities are ongoing and involve the major organizations that have a direct interest in young children including public and private agencies, parent groups, advocates, and other organizations. Public
awareness should be broad enough to reach the general public including persons with disabilities and include a variety of methods. Examples of methods to inform the general public can include posters, pamphlets, displays, toll free-numbers, websites, videos, TV, radio, newspaper releases, advertisements etc. ISBE funds a Child Find public awareness project that publishes and distributes public awareness materials. Please visit the Child Find Project at [http://www.childfind-idea-il.us/](http://www.childfind-idea-il.us/) to order materials.

**Screenings:**
The LEA has responsibility for identifying all children ages birth through 21 who are eligible for Early Intervention or special education and related services. In addition to the annual screening, LEAs must have on-going screening procedures (including conducting or arranging for screening for infants and toddlers) in place for children who may have a disability and are identified at any time of the year not only the annual screening. In other words, LEAs should not delay screening a child because that child has missed the scheduled screening date.

In order to ensure that all children under the age of 5 are screened annually for the purpose of identifying those who may need early intervention or special education and related services, each LEA should provide for regular screening opportunities in their local service area. Screenings should be held as necessary to ensure that all children and families can access them. In addition, LEAs should collaborate with all other entities that support Child Find including early childhood programs and health care providers.

**Primary Referral Source:**
LEAs serve as primary referral sources along with hospitals, physicians, child care programs, public health facilities, social services agencies, other clinics and health care providers, public agencies and staff in the child welfare system (including child protective service and foster care), homeless family shelters, and domestic violence shelters and agencies. As a primary referral source, the LEA is responsible for referring infants and toddlers who have been identified as possibly being eligible for early intervention services to the local Child and Family Connections office within five days.

**Local Interagency Council Membership:**
Coordination of community Child Find and public awareness activities for infants and toddlers is the responsibility of the Local Interagency Council (LIC) under the Child and Family Connections office. LEAs must serve as members of the LIC and actively participate in this coordination effort.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact the Early Childhood Division at 217/524-4835 or Pamela Reising Rechner at preising@isbe.net.