

# UNDERSTANDING NOTIFICATION



## Local Early Steps Contact Information:

### Local Early Steps (LES) notification to Local School Districts for Child Find Purposes

Early Steps (Part C) and preschool special education (Part B) are both parts of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Early Steps is responsible for providing services to eligible children from birth to age three. When a child turns three, services from Early Steps must end. If the child is eligible for Part B, he/she may receive preschool special education services through the local school district.

Through the process of Child Find, a school district has the responsibility to find, evaluate and identify children who may be eligible for special education services from birth through age 21. Early Steps is required by the IDEA to assist school districts in meeting Child Find requirements through a process called **notification**. Some of the questions that parents may have about notification are:

[Why have I received this brochure?](#)

For children enrolled in Early Steps prior to their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, the LES provides this brochure to parents to make them aware of the requirements related to notification. It is provided in a reasonable time prior to the IFSP meeting or periodic review closest to the child's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, ensuring that it is prior to the date notification is required.

For children found eligible for Early Steps after their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, Early Steps provides the brochure to parents on the date the child is determined eligible.

[What is notification and why is it important?](#)

Notification is the process of informing school districts that a child living in their district is receiving services from Early Steps. Notification is an important part of the Child Find process and is required under the IDEA. It helps school districts plan for children who may need preschool special education at age three.



#### What notification information is sent?

Notification information is: the child's name, the child's date of birth, parent(s) name, and parent contact information.

#### When is notification information sent?

Notification information must be sent to your local school district by the LES at least 9 months prior to your child's third birthday (by the time your child is 27 months of age), unless you opt out of notification. If your child becomes eligible for Early Steps at 27 months of age or older, notification will be sent by the LES to the school district within 30 calendar days of the initial IFSP meeting.

#### Will I have a chance to discuss notification further?

Yes. School district notification and the opt-out option will be discussed with parents no later than the IFSP meeting or periodic review closest to the child's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday and, for those children found eligible for Early Steps after the child's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, at the initial IFSP meeting.

#### How long will I have to decide whether I want to opt-out of notification?

Parents will verbally indicate whether they chose to opt out of school district notification no later than the IFSP meeting or periodic review closest to the child's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday or at the initial IFSP meeting, for those children found eligible for Early Steps after the child's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

#### May I share more information with the school district?

Yes. With your written permission, the LES may share additional information including your child's evaluation/assessment information or Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP). Sharing this information will be helpful to the school district for planning purposes.

#### How is notification information used?

Every school district has a policy for how they will use the information. How a school district uses the notification information will depend on their Child Find policies and procedures, but many districts use it to anticipate the number of children who may be referred for preschool special education. Some school districts also use the information to introduce themselves to families by calling or sending a letter. They may send you information on the preschool program and your rights related to special education. The school district cannot share the notification information with any other person or agency. Contact your local school district for more information about how they use the notification information.

#### What if I do not want the LES to send notification information for my child?

While your written consent is not required to send notification information, Florida does allow parents to "opt out" of having the LES send notification information of your child's name, date of birth, the parent's name, and parent's contact information. Tell your LES service coordinator if you do not wish to have the notification information shared with the school district.

#### If I choose to opt out of notification, does this mean my child will not receive special education services from the school district?

No. If you choose to opt out of having personally identifying information sent to the school district, it does not mean that your child cannot receive preschool special education services from the school district, if they are determined eligible. As part of transition planning, you will have the opportunity to discuss whether or not you wish to refer your child to the school district to be considered for preschool special education eligibility.