

Referral Status Updates

Enhancing Communication and Partnerships with Child Find's Referral Partners

Establishing clear referral mechanisms and communication protocols with referral sources is an important aspect of the Special Education Administrative Unit's responsibility for coordinating and implementing an effective child identification system.

What is a Referral Status Update?

Referral Status Update (RSU) means notifying a referral source about the status of a referral made to the Administrative Unit (AU) for developmental screening, and/or evaluation for special education. A model CDE referral form, available for AUs to customize, contains an RSU section, making it smooth and efficient for child find personnel to indicate the status of the AU activities and decisions relative to referrals made.

Why do Referral Sources need to know the status of referrals made?

Referral sources find it extremely valuable to learn about the status of a referral they made. Often, services or ongoing care they provide may be influenced by their knowledge of whether or not a child they referred received a screening, evaluation, or was found eligible for services. For example, early learning providers often use evaluation results to individualize their lesson planning.

Just as we don't expect families to carry information back from medical specialists to their primary provider, they should not be expected to summarize, interpret, or share the details from a developmental evaluation. The provider will want to review and consider the evaluation findings. The referral source may connect families with other resources if the family chose not to pursue an evaluation or the child didn't qualify.

What if parents haven't signed the referral form?

When the AU has received a referral without a parent signature for them to share information back to the referral source, it is encouraged that AU staff request the signed consent during the child find process so that an update may be sent to the referral source.

In recognition of the importance of communicating back to referral sources, a CDE model referral form for 3 - 5 year olds includes two places for parents to sign consent. First, they are requested to sign *prior* to the referral being made to acknowledge they have been informed of the referral being made. The parent signature affirms for the AU that the parent is requesting that screening and/or evaluation be initiated upon receipt of the referral. This parent authorization also allows the referring party to share developmental screening results or other pertinent records with the AU to inform the evaluation and eligibility determination process. Second, parents are asked to sign an additional consent for the AU to share information back to the referral source after the screening and/or evaluation and eligibility determination.

Referral Status Update Requirements

Part B of IDEA and the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) do not specifically require that a Referral Status Update be shared back to a referral source. This means that **parents must consent in writing** for AUs to share any information back to the referring party.

While there is no specific Part B requirement to send an RSU, doing so is compliant with ECEA 4.02 (2) (c) (ii) - coordination and implementation in the areas of interagency collaboration, public awareness, referral, screening and resource coordination. **Providing an RSU helps referring agencies meet families' needs**, as well as meet their internal requirements, thus building relationships that support coordinated services.



This is the section of the CDE model form parents are asked to sign prior to the referral being made to the AU:

Referral and Consent to Share Information

I am requesting that my child be referred to Child Find to determine eligibility for preschool special education services. I authorize my child's provider _____ to release the results of developmental screening and any pertinent medical history of _____ (name of child) DOB ____/____/____ to _____ (Child Find Coordinator/School District) to be considered in determining whether the child is a child with an educational disability.

Signed: _____ Relation to Child: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Furthermore, I authorize _____ (Child Find coordinator/school district) to share the results of the evaluation with _____ (child's provider).

Signed: _____ Relation to Child: _____ Date: ____/____/____

What if the CDE model referral form wasn't used?

There is no requirement that the CDE model form be used. AUs may utilize or adapt the form as they wish. If families were referred using a different form, or by phone, it is nonetheless encouraged to send an RSU whenever possible. Ask the family to identify the referral source and provide consent to share information. There's no need to complete the entire referral form, just include the child's name and complete the two boxes highlighted here. In other words, if your AU has a different process for receiving referrals, the model CDE form can still be used to provide RSUs.

The Referral Status Update section of the CDE model form looks like this:

Update from Child Find to Referral Source (Child Find to Fax to Referral Source if listed above)

Child Find completed developmental screening of this child on ____/____/____
 The child was evaluated on ____/____/____ and is...
 Eligible for preschool special education and (circle all):
SPL PT OT Behavioral Other: _____
 Not eligible for preschool special education at this time, further developmental evaluation may be indicated. Follow up with medical provider recommended.
 The child has not been in for screening or evaluation
 The child did not qualify for special education but a developmental delay was confirmed. Follow up with medical provider recommended.
 Please call me for more information regarding this child's screening/evaluation
Completed by: _____ Phone: _____
Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____ rev 11/2015

Where can I learn more?

- [Model Referral Form for 3 – 5 Child Find](#) (may be customized by the Administrative Unit)
- [Tips for Supporting Community Coordination around Child Identification](#)
- Assuring Better Child Health & Development: www.coloradoabcd.org
- Contact Heidi McCaslin, State Child Find Coordinator, at mccaslin_h@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6667

This CDE guidance document is meant for clarification, is not legally binding, and is not to be confused with legal advice. This guidance reflects CDE's recommendations, but Administrative Units (AUs) may have developed their own policies or procedures that differ from those described herein. Be sure to refer to your local AU's policies and procedures through the Director of Special Education. If you are seeking legal advice, please contact your legal counsel.