

Annual Public Notice

Early Childhood/Special Education Child Find

The Bucks County Intermediate Unit acts as a MAWA, a public education agency assuring early intervention to eligible three to five-year-olds who live in Bucks County. Throughout the notice below, the reader will find references to the IU, the MAWA, or to the MAWA agency—all referring to the Bucks County Intermediate Unit for the purposes of this notice.

The Bucks County Intermediate Unit along with other public education agencies in the Commonwealth 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 by offering 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. It is available in other languages upon request by contacting the individual at the end of this notice.

Early Intervention Identification Activity

Child find refers to activities undertaken by public education agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate children residing in Pennsylvania, 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 to 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

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disabilities, speech or language, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment including blindness and developmental delay in the case of a child that is of preschool age.

In Pennsylvania, a child between 3 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."

Upon parent permission, the child will be evaluated. The Bucks County Intermediate Unit will gather information regarding a child's physical, mental, emotional and health functioning through testing and assessment, observation of the child, as well as a review of any records made available to the Intermediate Unit through a physician and other providers of services. Input from parents is also an information source for identification.

Confidentiality

If the child is found to have a disability and because of the disability found to be in need of special education and related services, there will be a written record of the results called an education record. This record is directly related to the child and maintained by the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, as the MAWA agency. This record contains personally identifiable information to a child. It 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 number, a list of characteristics that would make the child's identity easily traceable or other information that would make the child's identity easily traceable.

The Bucks County Intermediate Unit protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information by designating an official responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of the records; training being provided to all persons using the information and; maintaining for public inspection a current list of employee's names and positions who may have access to the information. The IU will inform parents when this information is no longer needed to provide educational services to a child. The IU will destroy the information at the request of the parent, except general information such as the child's name, address, phone number and attendance record. This information may be maintained without time limitation.

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The parent of a child has a number of rights regarding the confidentiality of their child's records. The right to inspect and review any education records related to their child that are collected, maintained, or used by the Bucks County Intermediate Unit. IU will comply with a request for a parent to review the records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding planning for the child's special education program (called an IEP meeting), before a hearing should a parent and the IU disagree about how to educate a child who needs special education, and in no case, take more than 45 days to afford the parent an opportunity to inspect and review the child's records.

Parents have the right to an explanation and interpretations of the records; to be provided copies of the records if failure to provide the copies would effectively prevent the parent from exercising their right to inspect and review the records and; the right to have a representative inspect and review the records.

Upon request, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit will provide the parent with a list of the types and location of education records collected, maintained, or used by the agency. Additionally, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit may charge a fee for copies of records made in response to parent request for copies except it will not charge a fee if doing so will prevent the parent from inspecting and reviewing their child's records. The IU will not charge a fee to search or retrieve information.

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

Parent consent is required before personally identifiable information contained in the child's education records is disclosed to anyone other than officials of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit collecting or using the information for purposes of identification of the child, locating the

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child and evaluating the child or for any other purpose of making available a free appropriate public education to the child. An IU official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

A parent may file a written complaint to the address below alleging the rights described in this notice were not provided.

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
Division of Early Intervention and Support Services
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 Bucks County Intermediate Unit 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 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:

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=1990&sessInd=0&act=212>

To schedule an appointment for screening call 1-800-770-4822, extension 1716, or send an e-mail to WAdams@bucksiu.org. For additional information, contact Roseanna Mitsch at 1-800-770-4822, extension 1223.