

1100: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND CHILD FIND

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), as the lead agency, is responsible to ensure that the state has a comprehensive system of child find and public awareness activities.

The OSDE develops, prepares, and disseminates information and materials to all local SoonerStart Early Intervention Units (EIU) for the purpose of informing parents of the availability of early intervention services. Methods for informing the public and locating children and families include:

- Maintaining a central directory (211) that is updated on an annual basis. A local toll-free number (2-1-1) is available to every family and professional in Oklahoma including individuals with vision and hearing challenges. The toll free access line (211) links families and other concerned individuals to the local SoonerStart EIU.
- Collaborating with The Oklahoma Parent Center (OPC) which provides a statewide toll-free phone service to all families with children with disabilities. This service provides one-on-one consultation to provide families referral and advocacy resources. A telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) is available. The toll free number for OPC is 1-877-553-4332.
- Participating in the development and implementation of a plan for effective outreach, which may include public service announcements, newspaper articles, posters, and other community information processes, and reporting the results of these efforts to the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on an annual basis;
- Maintaining a system for supplying and distributing public awareness materials.

The lead agency also requires each SoonerStart site to inform the local community about Oklahoma's early intervention system. The Regional Early Intervention Coordinator (REIC) designates a person to coordinate and implement public awareness and child find activities at the local EIU.

Public awareness information should include:

- a description of SoonerStart services and availability;
- procedures for referring a child under the age of three to SoonerStart;
- an explanation of how to access a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation and other early intervention services;
- a description of how to access the SoonerStart central directory (211/JOIN) and the Oklahoma Parent Center; and
- information about the availability of Part B services for eligible children at age three.

Child find information must include the name of the appropriate individual(s) to contact in order to access SoonerStart services.

All activities are to be documented on the **Public Awareness Plan (Appendix A)**. The plan designates the activities to be accomplished, the public awareness materials (**Appendixes B-F**) to be used; the target date and the completed date of each activity and the individual responsible for completion. The

SoonerStart Public Awareness Plan emphasizes child find requirements of IDEA, Part C. (*34 CFR §303.302*) (see **SoonerStart Early Intervention Policies and Procedures Manual - 2013**).

The SoonerStart Public Awareness Plan is developed for the fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th). The local EIU submits the plan electronically to the SoonerStart Program Managers by July 1st of each year. The previous year's completed Public Awareness plan is maintained by the REIC at the local EIU.