

57, 58, 59...: Child Find, December 1st Child Count and Part C Indicators 05 and 06

Let's begin with a quiz!

December 1st is an important date for the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia because:

- A. It provides an opportunity to measure the effectiveness of Virginia's child find efforts.
- B. It's the deadline for confirming for Santa Claus the numbers of children in Virginia who have been either naughty or nice throughout the year.
- C. It's the start of each new Part C fiscal year.
- D. It provides data that informs state and local Part C allocations.
- E. A and D
- F. None of the above

If you answered "E", nice job! Yes, December 1st—or, more specifically, the **December 1st child count**—provides an opportunity to measure the effectiveness of the state's child find efforts and provides data that informs state and local Part C allocations.

"How does it do that, exactly?" Glad you asked!

Child find is a required component of Part C of IDEA. Simply put and based on this year's state targets, we expect that at least 1.58% of all infants (birth-to-1) and at least 3.54% of all infants and toddlers (birth-to-3) on any given day should be receiving Part C early intervention services and supports. It's our job to find them! (Really, what good is an early intervention system if families don't know about it?)

To assess how well we're doing, Virginia counts all children with active IFSPs on the same day—December 1st—and then compares those numbers to population data and the percentage of infants and toddlers we would expect to be in the system. For example: Let's say Happy Harbor ITC serves five counties with a combined total population of 100,000. Data provided to the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia indicates that there are 1,075 infants (birth-to-1) and 6,240 infants and toddlers (birth-to-3) within this ITC's catchment area. Based on this, we would expect Happy Harbor ITC's December 1st child counts to be 17 (birth-to-1) and 220 (birth-to-3). When we look at the actual counts reported by Happy Harbor, we see that 21 infants and 193 infants and toddlers were receiving services on December 1st.

What does this tell us? The results suggest that Happy Harbor ITC is a) finding and serving the number of infants we would expect but b) neither finding nor serving all eligible infants and toddlers. Again—this is what the data *suggests*. It's not an exact science...which is why when evaluating localities (for the purposes of determination reporting) meaningful differences are calculated to determine if lower-than-expected counts are cause for concern.

State and local child find data for infants (birth-to-1) are reported as Indicator 05. The data for infants and toddlers combined (birth-to-3) are reported as Indicator 06. As you may recall from last month's discussion, the results of all Part C indicators are used for the purposes of calculating each locality's determination as well as the state's overall determination.

"Didn't you say something about child find and Part C allocations?" Yes. A locality's December 1st child count is factored into the formula used each year to allocate Part C funds. That said, it's just one of a handful of factors used in the formula—so it's possible for an increase or decrease in child count to have varying impact. A number of localities have shared concerns about decreased December 1st child counts amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This is understandable. We all will know more once the counts have been finalized and plugged into the formula. Stay tuned.