



**Finding Early Childhood Children  
with Disabilities**

# What Is Child Find ?

Child Find is a continuous process of public awareness activities which may include screening, designed to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who may be in need of early intervention programs or special education as soon as possible.



# Screening for Child Find



- Identifies children who require further evaluation
- Brief & General
- Not intended to use for program placement or diagnosis

# Why are Screenings so Important?

## Prevalence of Children with Disabilities:

- Approximately 12–16% of children have disabilities
- Only 30% of children with disabilities are detected before school entrance

Earls & Shackelford, *Pediatrics*, 2006; Glascoe, *Pediatric Review*, 2000

# Incidence of children identified as having a disability by age

0 – 3 Years



2.8%

3 – 5 Years



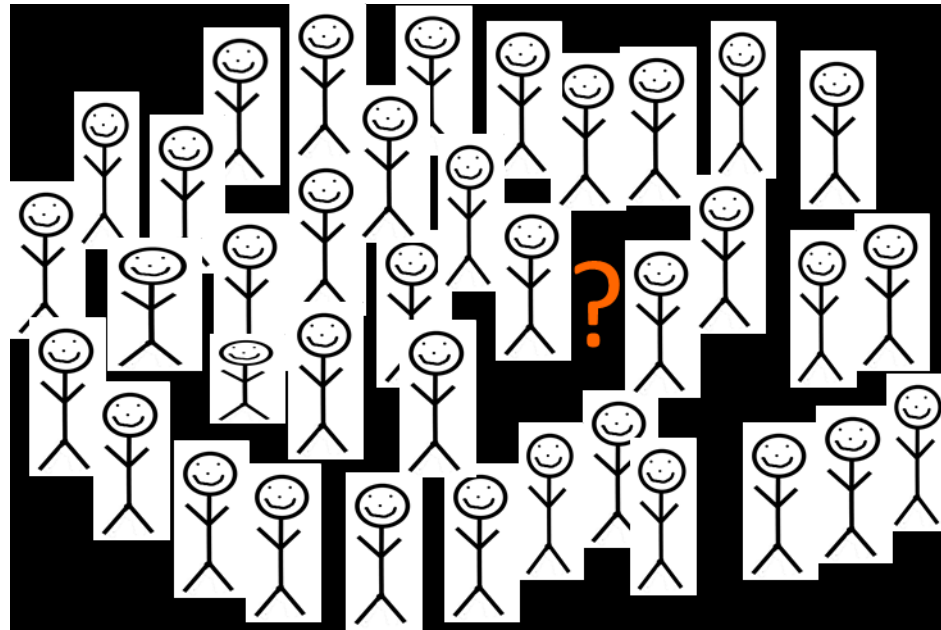
6.0%

6 – 21 Years



10.5%

# Why Screen?



BECAUSE WE ARE MISSING  
CHILDREN!

National Initiative  
Birth to Five – Watch me Thrive!

# Child Find is a Continuous Process





# Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Comprehensive Child Find System ensures that all children who are in need of early intervention or special education services are identified, located, and evaluated.



# Lead Agencies in Wisconsin

## **Part C – Birth to 3**

Department of Health Services

County Administrative Agency

## **Part B – 3 through 21**

Department of Public Instruction

Local School Districts

# Child Find Includes All Children

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers

Private, public or tribal school children

Highly mobile children

Homeless children

Home Schooled Children

Migrant children

Wards of the state



# LEA Requirements

**Local Education Agencies are required to post:**

1. Model Notice of Child Find Activity:  
Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable  
Information
2. Model Notice to Parents and Individuals  
Required to Make Referrals

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/laws-procedures-bulletins/procedures/childfind>

# LEA Requirements

3. According to Wisconsin State Statute 115.77  
LEAs shall do all of the following:

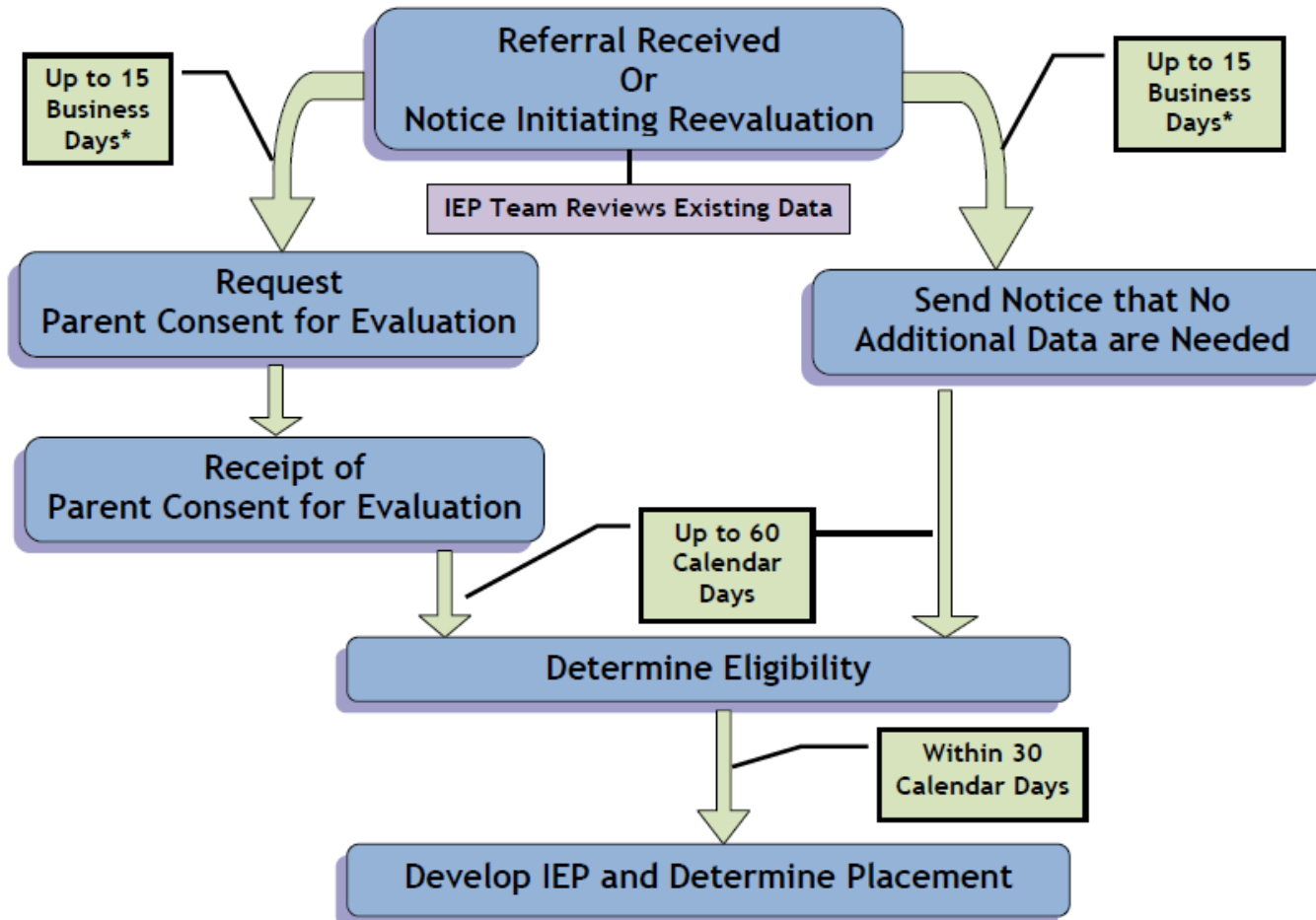
- Identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services
- Establish written procedures for accepting and processing referrals
- Document and date the receipt of each referral

# LEA Requirements

Provide information and in-service opportunities to **all** of its licensed staff to familiarize them with the agency's referral procedures

- At least annually, inform parents and persons required to make referrals about the LEA's referral and evaluation procedures
- Within 15 business days of receiving a referral, send to the child's parents a request for consent to evaluate or a notice that no additional data is necessary.

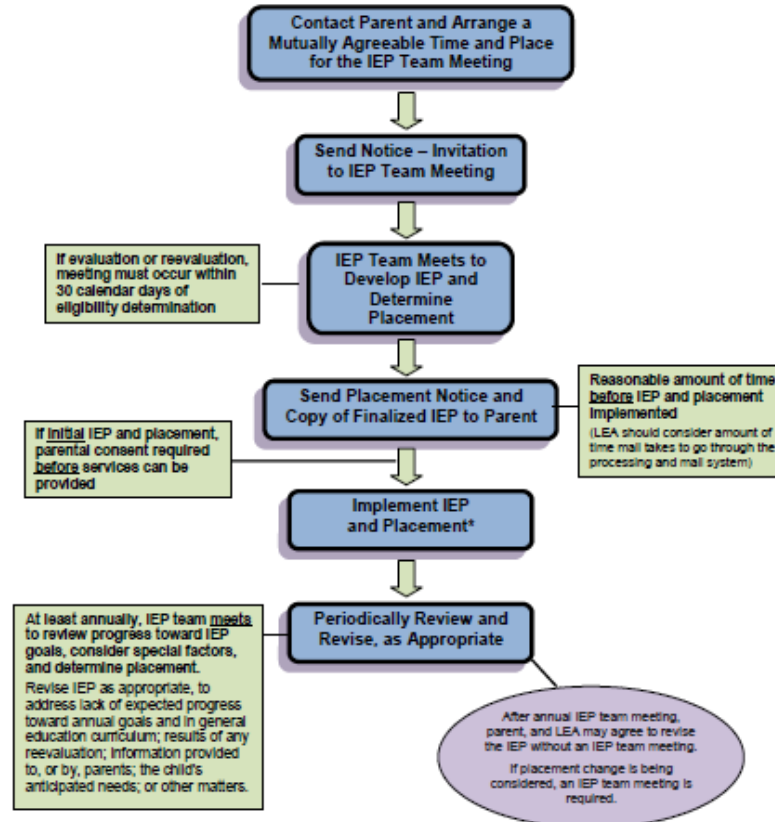
# Evaluation Timelines



\*"Business day" means Monday through Friday except for Federal and State holidays.

May 2013

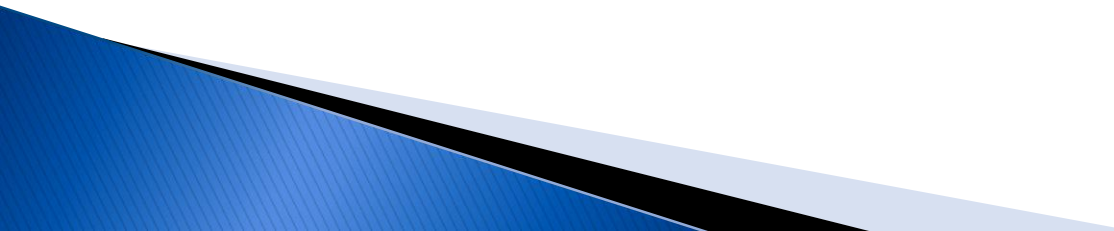
# Individual Educational Program (IEP) & Placement Timelines




\*At the beginning of each school year, each LEA must have an IEP in effect for each student from whom the district has FAPE responsibility



# Past Practices

1. Children were screened to determine readiness for kindergarten
  2. Locally developed screening tools were used
  3. Children were screened at “stations” and usually separated from parents
  4. Parents had limited involvement in screening
  5. Child Development Days were held
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# Current Practices

1. All children screened as early as possible.
  2. Screening instruments used are valid, reliable and have normative samples.
  3. Child Find is a continuous process rather than a single event.
  4. Parents are recognized as experts on their children's development.
  5. Community resources are shared with families of young children.
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# What is an Informed Referral Network?

A coordinated effort by community partners to:



**Identify**

**Locate**

**Evaluate**

all children with a disability

# Informed Referral Network

*One Tapestry ... Many Threads*

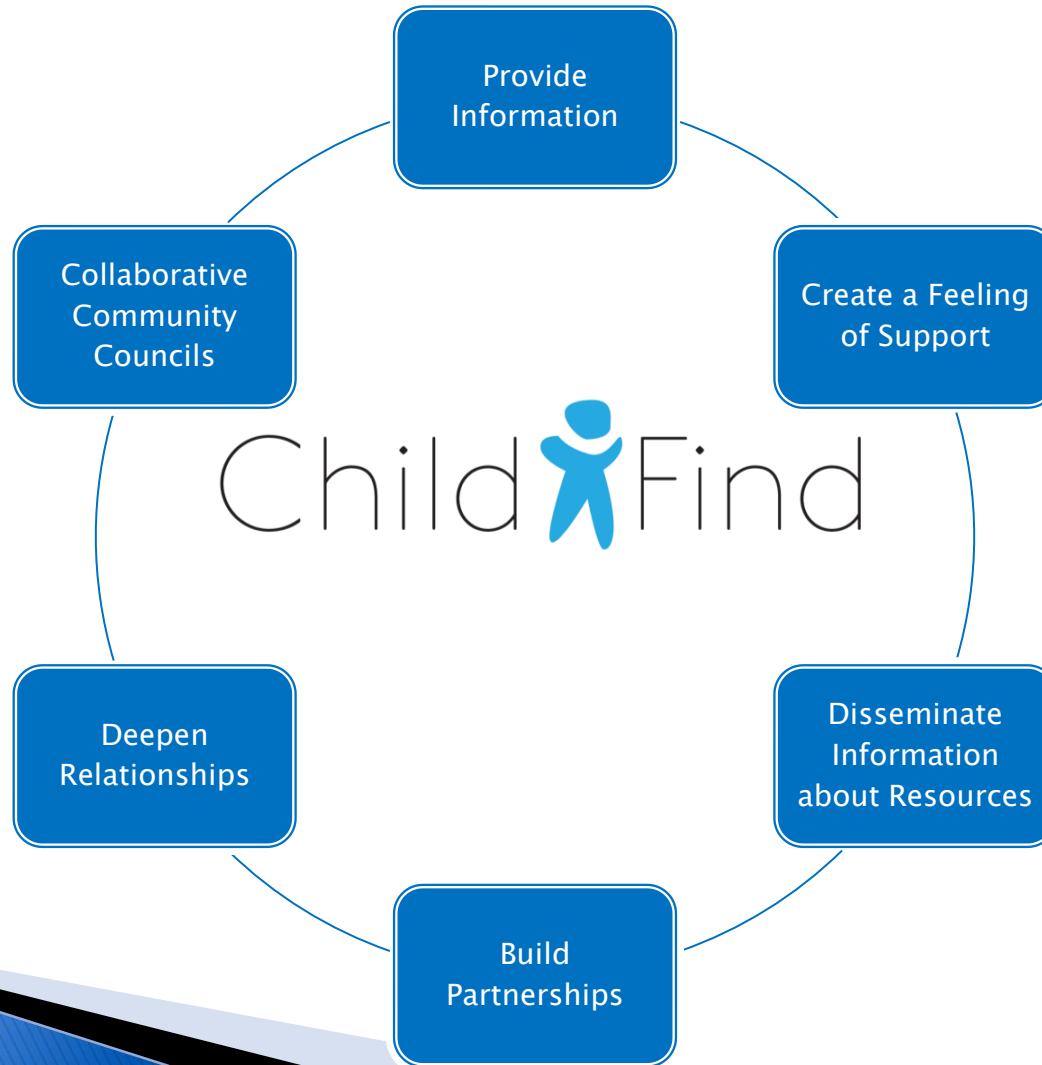
## **COMMUNITY PARTNERS** may include:

Advocates  
Bilingual Services  
Child Care Providers  
Childcare Resource and Referral  
County Agencies  
County Birth to 3 Programs  
Domestic Abuse Services  
Faith Based Organizations  
Families  
Family Resource Centers  
Guardians

Head Start/Early Head Start  
Health Care Providers  
Health/Social Service Departments  
Higher Education  
Homeless Liaisons  
Home Visiting Programs  
Law Enforcement  
Local School Districts  
Migrant Services  
Parents  
Physicians/Doctors

Preschool Providers  
Public, Private, and Home Schools  
Public Libraries  
Recreation Service Providers  
Service Clubs  
Shelters  
State Agencies  
Tribal Head Start  
Tribal Service Providers  
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)  
Other

# Benefits of an Informed Referral Network ?



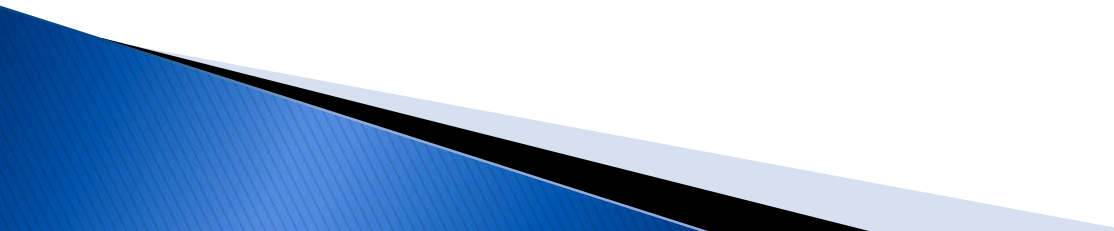
# Research

Making connections with community partners has proven to be the most effective practice in identifying young children with special needs.

Carl Dunst and Patricia Clow 2007



# Where Do We Start?

- Think about the life styles, attitudes and interests of families in your community
  - Choose those methods which you think will work most effectively and efficiently on a continuous basis
  - Contact a wide range of community partners to serve as your informed referral network
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# Public Awareness

Child Find brochures placed in your community

District/Community Websites / Billboards

Public Service Announcements

- Direct mailings / emails
- Websites / facebook / twitter
- News media





# Types of Screening

Newborn

Blood Levels

Vision/Hearing

Developmental/Behavioral

Autism

Social/Emotional

Learning and Development

Universal Screening for Instruction (PreK–12)



# Screening is Designed To

**Educate** families about typical child development

**Develop/Expand** awareness of community resources for young children and their families

**Identify** young children in need of further evaluation

# Screening Activities Should Include

Parent and/or care giver involvement

Sensitivity to the child's cultural background/primary language

Results reviewed by trained personnel and shared with parents

# Screening Instrument Considerations

- Age appropriate
- Easily administered
- Cost effective
- Based on valid, reliable and normative samples

# Developmental Screeners

## Suggested Examples:

Ages and Stages  
Questionnaire  
**(ASQ-3)**



Ages & Stages Questionnaires\*,  
Third Edition (ASQ-3)

Ages & Stages Questionnaires\*:  
Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE)

Parents' Evaluation of  
Developmental Status  
**(PEDS)**



# Where and When Could Child Find Screenings Occur?

## Where:

Child Care Settings

Family Resource Centers

Head Start

Home

Libraries

Medical Settings

Schools

Other

## When:

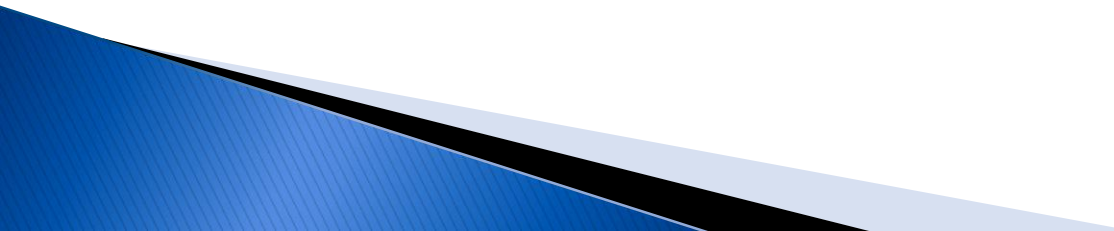
Anytime there is a request for screening

Monthly, quarterly, yearly

In combination w/ other school events (4K/5K registration)

In combination with other community events

# Who can be involved in Child Find Screening?

- Each school district identifies a screening team.
  - The screening team may consist of regular education staff, special education staff and/or community partners/agencies.
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# Re-Screening

General Education staff *may* rescreen

Special Education staff *may not* rescreen



# Universal Screening

A process utilizing multiple sources of information, *including administration of a quick, standardized screening tool or tools*; to guide decisions about “next steps” to address individual children’s needs



- to identify children with suspected disabilities (as required of public schools under IDEA Child Find)
- Never provides a diagnosis
- Intended to answer one question ... do we need to take a closer look?



- to establish a baseline for curriculum planning for a group of children
- to determine how well children are performing relative to a benchmark for a specified outcome area
- can include use of curriculum-based assessments at select points across the year

# Child Find and Response to Intervention (RtI)

RtI does not require that children go through a multi-tiered system of supports prior to being referred to special education, thereby delaying and often restricting referral to special services.

# Suspect a Disability?

Next steps would include:


- Referral
- Evaluation
- Determination of a Disability and a need for Special Education

# In Summary

**Child Find** is a continuous process of public awareness activities which may include screening, designed to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who may be in need of early intervention programs or special education as soon as possible.



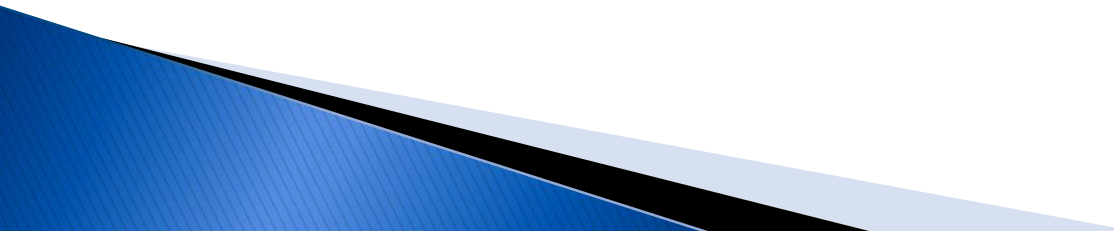
# Optional Discussion Activity

1. Many families have stories about the frustration they faced in finding out what services might be available for their child. Professionals in education, medicine, social services, and child care can help by being knowledgeable about early intervention services in their community. How is your school district making connections with your community partners?
  2. Having a program available for young children with special needs does not ensure that the children who need such services will find their way to the program. What is your school district implementing to insure that children are receiving services that are needed?
  3. Parents frequently report that it takes much time and effort to discover how to access assessment and intervention services for a child with special needs. What could a school district do to educate parents and community about timelines?
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# Optional Discussion Activity

4. Child Find is a systematic process of identifying young children who may be eligible for enrollment in special education. Child Find efforts are designed to inform the general public about typical and atypical child development as well as referral procedures. How does your school district do this?
5. Some children who participate in Child Find activities may be “at risk” for developing a disability because of environmental or biological factors. List possible follow-ups for this “at risk” child.
6. When a school district is formulating goals for Child Find activities they should consider 6 factors (provide information, create feeling of support, disseminate information about resources, build partnership, deepen relationships and develop collaborative community councils). Describe what your school district is doing to formulate Child Find awareness goals.

# Optional Discussion Activity

7. Screenings are generally easily administered, adequate normative samples, valid, reliable, and inexpensive. Does the screening instrument you presently use in your school district meet the above criteria?
  8. How does your district ensure a quick response to a request for screening and share screening results?
  9. Sometimes children who passed the screening are later found to need special education services. Discuss how this can be prevented.
  10. Sometimes children are referred for a special education evaluation and found not be eligible for services. Discuss why they were referred and what follow-up could be provided.
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# Questions?





# Child Find Resources

Collaborating Partners

[www.collaboratingpartners.com](http://www.collaboratingpartners.com)



Wisconsin Birth to Three Program

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/index.htm>

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/disabilities-support.php#programsupport>

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/early-childhood/child-find>

Wisconsin CESA Early Childhood Contacts

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/disabilities-support.php#programsupport>

# Children

“We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are formed, his blood is being made, and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer ‘Tomorrow’, his name is Today.”

Gabriela Mistral 1889–1957