PRESENTED BY:

Deborah Aiello

ADVOCACY 101

Tools, Training & Resources for Families

PREPARED FOR:

SWR SEPTA

PARENT TO PARENT NYS

- **Email List:** regional listserv connecting families to share information, resources, and support
- **Training Catalog:** ongoing workshops on navigating services, rights, and the special education system
- **Parent Matching:** connects families with a trained support parent who has walked a similar path
- **Health Information Center:** information and guidance to help families navigate health care questions and resources

PARENT TO PARENT OF NYS

ptopnys.org

LI REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

- **Email List:** sign up to receive information about future training offerings and support groups
- **Training Catalog:** workshops for families, community members, students in addition to professionals
- **Virtual Community Cafe:** collaboration and resource sharing around special education topics
- **Upcoming Workshop Flyers:** information and guidance to help families navigate health care questions and resources



New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education
Educational Partnership

Opportunity Education
CCI
Collaboration

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION
(516) 299-3812

LI Regional Partnership/CCI/FACE Center

THE ARC @SCHOOL

The Arc@School Advocacy Curriculum

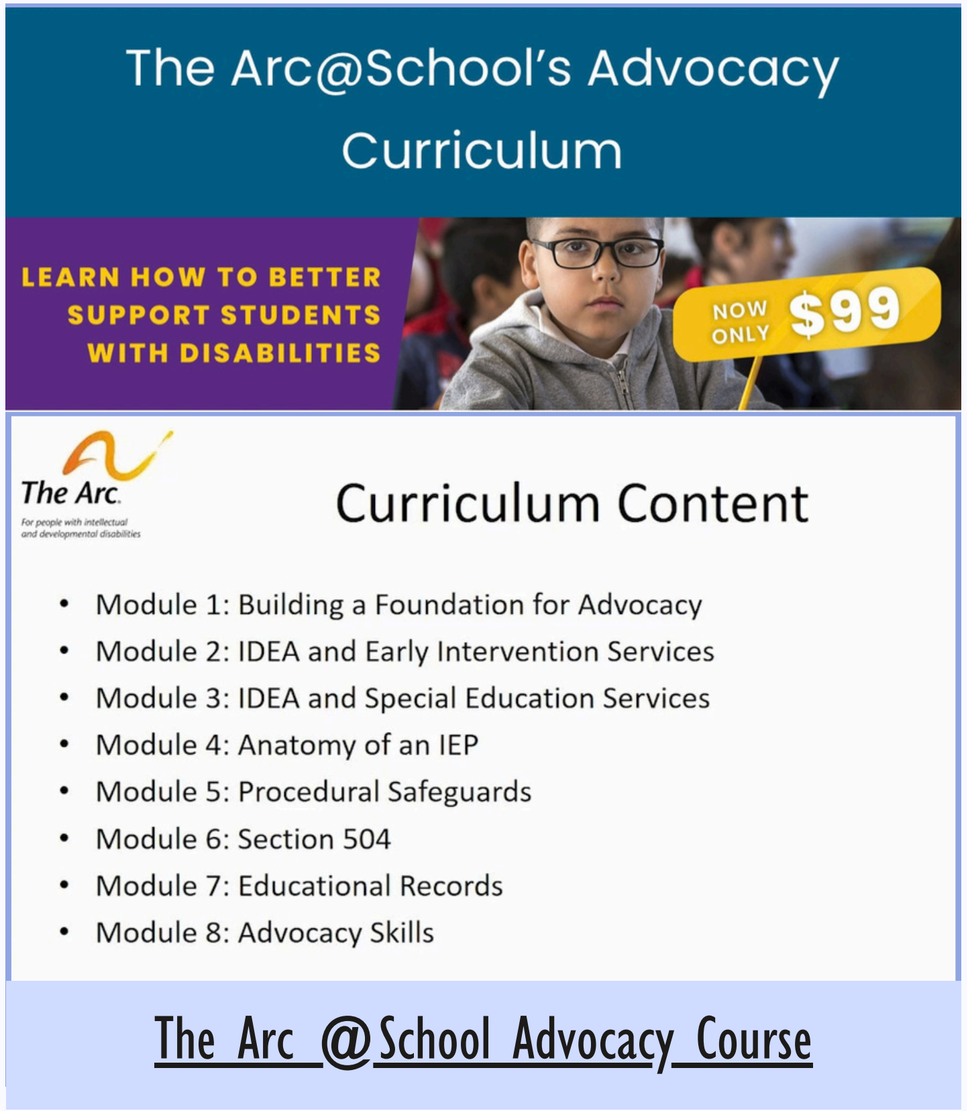
- A self-paced online course
- Covers the basics of navigating the special education system, including early intervention, IEPs, and Section 504
- Also available in Spanish
- For families, educators and advocates to understand what the law requires and available services

How it works

- Eight modules, each about one hour long
- Every module includes a pre-test, listening guide, narrated videos, a post-test, and extra resources
- Complete at your own pace within six months

What you receive

- A certificate of completion
- Ongoing online access to all curriculum materials



COPAA

Council of Parent Attorneys & Advocates

Who can join

- Limited to attorneys, advocates (paid or unpaid), and parents, using IDEA's broad definition of "parent," which includes foster parents, guardians, and others authorized to make educational decisions
- Membership is generally not open to people who receive more than half their income from school districts or education agencies, or attorneys and advocates who have represented them within five years

Member benefits

- Access to free and discounted professional learning
- 24/7 online forums and weekly advocate discussion groups
- Sample documents, articles and advocacy tools
- Scholarships available for trainings based on need

Trainings

- **BSEAT**: a ten-session course for parents and advocates, covering Section 504, the ADA, FAPE and LRE, the IEP process, tests and measurements, and written communication
- **SEAT 2.0:** a 27-session course with a required 40 to 60 hour practicum, for those with at least two years of advocacy experience
- **Business of Special Ed Advocacy:** a five-session course on launching an advocacy practice, covering legal structure, billing, client intake, marketing, and operations.
- **State & Local Change Makers Academy:** An eight-session course for members who want to influence special education policy at the state and local level; held annually.
- **Webinars and learning paths** on a wide range of advocacy topics
- **Annual Conference:** intensive professional development for advocates and attorneys, with most sessions also open to parents

WRIGHTSLAW CONFERENCE

Wrightslaw Special Education Law & Advocacy Training

- A one-day program led by Pete Wright, Esq.
- Offered in person and virtually through Zoom, usually hosted by parent training centers and disability organizations
- Designed for parents, advocates, educators, or attorneys

What you'll learn

- Special education law, rights, and responsibilities
- How tests and measurements show progress or regression
- Writing SMART IEP goals
- Tactics and strategies for effective advocacy
- Writing effective parent letters and preparing for IEP meetings

What's included

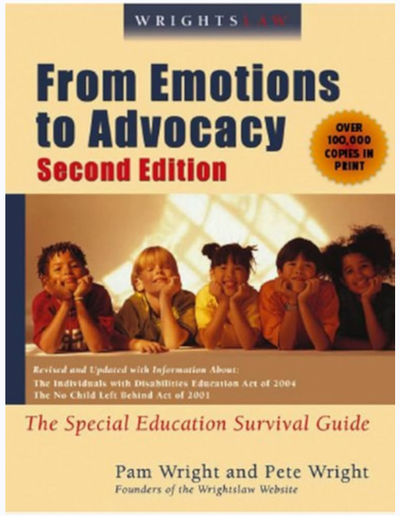
- Registration typically comes with three Wrightslaw books: Special Education Law, From Emotions to Advocacy, and All About IEPs, including pdf downloads
- Find their training schedule for upcoming dates



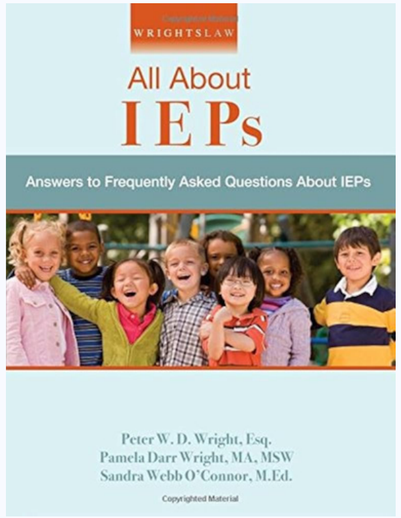
Wrightslaw Website

BOOKS TO READ

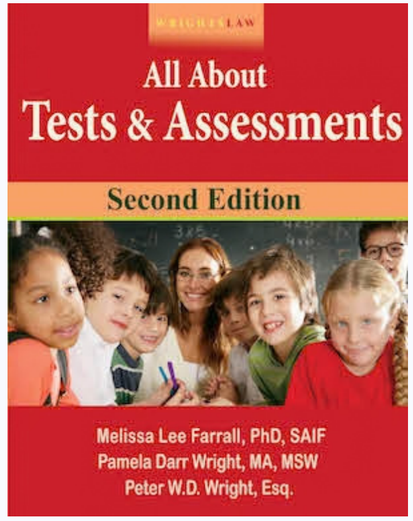
Buy the FETA Book



Buy All About IEPs



Buy All About Tests



Wrightslaw books turn special education law into plain language for parents and widely used by parents, advocates, and educators.

From Emotions to Advocacy: The Special Education Survival Guide

- Helps parents move from frustration and worry to calm, strategic advocacy
- Teaches you to organize your child's records and build a paper trail
- Explains how to write effective letters and prepare for meetings
- Introduces measurable (SMART) IEP goals and how to track progress
- A good starting point for any family new to special education

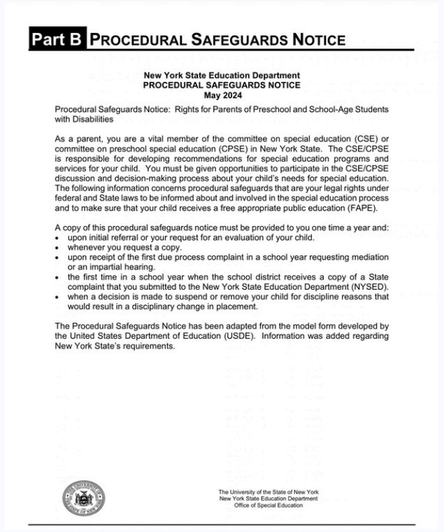
All About IEPs

- Quick, easy-to-find answers to the most common IEP questions
- Covers who is on the IEP team, what must be in an IEP, meetings, placement, and transition
- Answers are tied to the actual law (IDEA), so you know what's required, not just recommended
- A handy reference to bring to IEP meetings

All About Tests & Assessments

- Explains the evaluations used to determine eligibility and services
- Breaks down standard scores, percentile ranks, and other test terms
- Helps parents read evaluation reports and see whether a child is making progress
- Prepares you to ask informed questions about your child's data

NYS GUIDES



Part B PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS NOTICE

New York State Education Department
PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS NOTICE
May 2024

Procedural Safeguards Notice: Rights for Parents of Preschool and School-Age Students with Disabilities

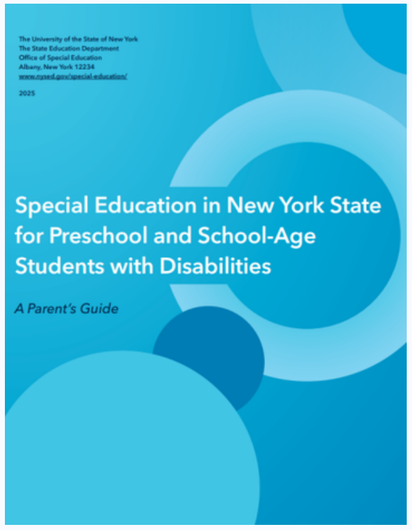
As a parent, you are a vital member of the committee on special education (CSE) or committee on preschool special education (CPSE) in New York State. The CSE/CPSE is responsible for developing recommendations for special education programs and services for your child. You must be given opportunities to participate in the CSE/CPSE discussion and decision-making process about your child's needs for special education. The following information concerns procedural safeguards that are your legal rights under federal and State laws to be informed about and involved in the special education process and to make sure that your child receives a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

A copy of this procedural safeguards notice must be provided to you one time a year and:

- upon initial referral or your request for an evaluation of your child.
- whenever you request a copy.
- upon receipt of the first due process complaint in a school year requesting mediation or an impartial hearing.
- the first time in a school year when the school district receives a copy of a State complaint that you submitted to the New York State Education Department (NYSED).
- when a decision is made to suspend or remove your child for discipline reasons that would result in a disciplinary change in placement.

The Procedural Safeguards Notice has been adapted from the model form developed by the United States Department of Education (USDE). Information was added regarding New York State's requirements.

The University of the State of New York
New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education



The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Office of Special Education
Albany, New York 12234
www.nysed.gov/special-education/

2025

Special Education in New York State for Preschool and School-Age Students with Disabilities

A Parent's Guide

Procedural Safeguards Notice (NYSED, May 2024)

- Explains your legal rights as a parent of a preschool or school-age student with a disability
- Confirms that you are a vital member of the CSE/CPSE and must be given chances to participate in decisions about your child
- Covers key rights such as consent, prior written notice, access to records, and independent evaluations
- Outlines your options when you disagree: mediation, state complaints, and impartial hearings
- Districts must give you a copy at least once a year, at initial referral or evaluation request, when a complaint is filed, when discipline leads to a change in placement, and any time you ask
- Based on the federal model, with New York's requirements added

Special Education in NYS: A Parent's Guide (NYSED, 2025)

- A plain-language walkthrough of the special education process from start to finish
- Explains referral, evaluation, eligibility, and how the CSE/CPSE develops the IEP
- Describes the range of programs and services and the least restrictive environment
- Covers preschool (CPSE) as well as school-age (CSE) students
- Points families to state and regional resources for further help
- A great companion to the Procedural Safeguards Notice: the Guide explains the process, the Notice explains your rights within it

These free resources from the NYS Education Department explain the special education process and your rights under both federal and New York State law.

NYSED LINKS

Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Guidelines for Determining the Need for a One-to-One Aide

Guidelines for Determining the Need for a One-to-One Nurse

Extended School Year Programs and Services

Diploma Assessment Appeals and Safety Nets

Special Education Quality Assurance Regional Units

These are just some of the many helpful links on the NYSED website.

New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Knowledge › Skill › Opportunity



Subscribe to the Office of Special Education newsletter and weekly updates.

YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S VOICE!

How to use your voice

- Attend SEPTA and PTA meetings
- Volunteer or chair events
- Run for PTA positions
- Join School District Committees
- Attend BOE meetings or watch online
- Speak at BOE meetings



QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU