

Free Appropriate Public Education Basics

All school-age children with special needs are entitled to receive a **free appropriate public education (FAPE)** under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 (**Section 504**) and/or the **1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA'97)**.

The Arc's Education Advocacy program will help you learn how to:

- **Request** a *multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE)*
- **Inform** the school that your child requires accommodations or *specialty designed instructions (SDI)* to make meaningful educational progress in school.
- **Receive** an *evaluation report (ER)*
- **Develop** an *Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with your IEP Team*
- Write a *Section 504 Accommodation Plan*
- **Ensure** the IEP includes the entitled services, including *OT, PT, Speech and Language Therapy, and Psychological Counseling or Psychiatric Counseling*.
- **Incorporate** an *extended school year (ESY) program if appropriate* to achieve his or her *IEP* goals
- **Read and understand** your school district's *Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP)*
- **Understand** how to negotiate the *least restrictive environment (LRE)* appropriate for your child to meet his or her *IEP* goals.
- **Learn** about *the special rules in Pennsylvania for excluding children receiving special education services for disciplinary reasons*. Before a student is excluded from school for more than 10 school days in a row or 15 total school days in any one school year, the *IEP* team must meet and a new *NOREP* must be signed, because such exclusions are considered a change in placement. The exclusion of a child with I/DD for any amount of time is considered a change in placement and requires all of the steps mentioned above. If you do not agree with the change in placement on the *NOREP*, your child remains in the existing placement until due process is complete.

These are just some examples of how The Arc can help you understand the special education system.



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

EDUCATION ADVOCACY

Our Mission:

It is the mission of The Arc of Delaware County to advocate for the civil rights, social inclusion and self-determination of persons with developmental disabilities. Together with our network of members and community partners, we provide advocacy services for individuals and families, connect people with resources, improve systems of supports & services, promote inclusive community practices, and influence public policy.

Affiliate agency of

The Arc of PA and The Arc of the US



740 S. Chester Rd. Suite G
Swarthmore, PA 19081

610.544.6600 (Phone)

610.544.8916 (Fax)

www.TheArcofDelco.org



Achieve with us.

WHAT IS EDUCATION ADVOCACY?

Are you confused and overwhelmed at school meetings? Does special education jargon not make much sense to you? Do you find the whole special education process baffling and bewildering? The Arc of Delaware County has an Education Advocacy Program that can help you understand the system, Special Education Laws, educate you about your rights, offer referrals, advice, and suggestions for your child's IEP.



HOW CAN THE ARC HELP YOU?

The Arc can offer you basic information about how the education system works, refer you to the appropriate officials and agencies, and provide you with information to help you request a meeting with your school.

The Arc also can provide an Education Advocate—a person who is trained, knowledgeable, and experienced in Education Advocacy—someone who can help guide you through the process of services and help you achieve success in getting services your child needs. Simply contact The Arc and request to speak to the Education Advocate.

Fee-For-Service Education Advocacy Program Guidelines

- Education Advocacy Program participants are asked to join as a member of The Arc of Delaware County. Current membership fee is \$25 for an individual or family.
- Education Advocacy Program participants must enroll in the Education Advocacy Program by enrolling and signing an Education Advocacy Release Form. Once enrolled, you are assigned an Education Advocate who will meet with you to review your case.
- The Education Advocacy Program participant agrees to pay a fee of \$50 per hour to The Arc for this service.
- The Arc has established an Initial Fee of \$150 to enroll in the Education Advocacy Program. This fee begins the first phase of the Education Advocacy Program and includes the first three (3) hours of advocacy service, including an Initial Intake Assessment where the Advocate meets with you and reviews your case materials (IEP, etc.) to plan a strategy. It also includes any time the Education Advocate spends on researching your case and reviewing your files. In many cases, this fee also includes the IEP or Team Meeting. In cases where more time is necessary, the Education Advocate will communicate to you what time is needed and a fee will be assessed based upon the number of hours of the case. You will always know how much you will pay in advance.

- After the first three (3) hours are exhausted, the Education Advocate program participant agrees to pay the corresponding fees on an ongoing basis. These fees are explained to you in advance.



- The Arc understands that there are families who may not be able to afford the fees for this service and have set up a Financial Assistance Program based on household income for families who reside in Delaware County. The Financial Assistance program guidelines are as follows:
 1. Households of \$70,000 or more are asked to pay \$50 per hour for service.
 2. Households with household income of between \$50,000 and \$70,000 are asked to pay \$25 per hour for service.
 3. Households with household income below \$50,000 are offered this program free of charge.
- A Financial Assistance Application is required with proof of household income. Contact The Arc for more information.