



## Special Education Advocacy Tips for Child Welfare Professionals



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Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.

and the New York City Administration for Children's Services

May 2005

## **Project Achieve at Advocates for Children**

In an effort to improve the educational outcomes of children in or at risk of placement in foster care, Advocates for Children (AFC) of New York launched *Project Achieve*, a collaborative program operating on-site at area foster care agencies. From fall 2002 through spring 2004, AFC piloted the model program at Louise Wise Services, a Harlem-based agency. AFC staff assisted caseworkers, birth and foster parents, and young people, and provided direct representation to families. AFC also worked with Louise Wise to develop internal policies and protocols so that Louise Wise staff could more accurately identify and more effectively address children's educational issues. As of September 2004, AFC's *Project Achieve* has been on-site at two agencies located in Queens: Forestdale, Inc. and New York Foundling Hospital, Queens Family Services.

After the conclusion of the pilot at Louise Wise in the spring of 2004, AFC and the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) launched a joint capacity-building initiative to share *Project Achieve's* successful strategies with other ACS-affiliated direct services and private foster care agencies. AFC and ACS offered a series of seminars for supervisory staff at foster care agencies throughout New York City, during which AFC staff conducted needs assessments and provided tools, training and technical assistance to assist agencies with improving upon their existing protocols and procedures for addressing educational issues. Participating agencies articulated the need to provide their caseworkers with easily accessible and tailored information about navigating the New York City public school system - especially the special education system. In response, AFC and ACS have developed this booklet of advocacy-oriented tip sheets on issues commonly experienced by students in or at risk of placement in foster care and form letters for use by child welfare professionals in resolving school-related problems.

Advocates for Children's Project Achieve is made possible by the generous support of the Ira W. DeCamp Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The New York City Administration for Children's Services protects and ensures the safety and well-being of New York City's children and strengthens families. Formed in 1996, the agency oversees the City's programs of child protection, foster care, preventive services, adoption, child care and Head Start.

**Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.** was founded in 1971 by parents of at-risk children in New York City who were not receiving appropriate educational services from the public schools. From its inception, AFC has worked in partnership with the City's most impoverished and vulnerable families to secure quality and equal public education for all children (from birth to age 21). AFC is the only organization of its kind in New York City that provides a full range of services, from parent education and technical assistance, legal services, public policy and impact litigation, geared toward improving access to educational services. AFC targets children who are at greatest risk for school-based discrimination and/or academic failure due to factors such as disability, poverty, ethnicity, immigration status/limited English proficiency, involvement in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, homelessness and domestic violence.

## Special Education Advocacy Tips for Child Welfare Professionals

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### Referrals for Evaluation for Special Education Services

A child should be referred for an evaluation any time the child's behavior and/ or academic performance indicates that the child may have a disability. Some signs that a child may be in need of special education services include poor school performance, long-standing behavioral difficulties, school avoidance, and diagnosis of a medical or psychiatric condition.

#### STEP 1: Referral

Send a letter of referral to the school and regional Committee on Special Education (CSE) office (see attached list of CSEs and attached sample letter).

**TIP:** To determine the child's region, go to the Department of Education's (DOE) website (<http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/default.htm>) and type in the child's address. The website will give you the child's zoned school, district and region. You may also call the Office of Zoning to determine the region and district of the child (212/374-5426).

#### STEP 2: Consent

Once a referral is made, the school or CSE must obtain informed consent from the student's parent to begin the evaluation.\* Generally, a member of the School-Based Support Team (SBST) will contact the parent to obtain consent.

**\*NOTE:** Under current federal and State law, the definition of parent in the special education context is "a natural or adoptive parent", a guardian (but not the State if the child is a ward of the State) or a person acting in place of a parent, such as a grandparent or stepparent.

If the child's natural parents' rights have been terminated or the agency has made every attempt to locate the parents and no parent can be found, a surrogate parent should be appointed. The surrogate parent cannot be an employee of the agency, but can be the child's foster parent. *A foster parent cannot act as a parent in the special education context unless the child's natural parents' rights have been terminated or the parent cannot be located.* (This may change in the future due to new federal legislation.)

### STEP 3: Evaluation

After obtaining informed consent, the SBST or the CSE should evaluate the student in all areas of suspected disability. Evaluations usually consist of a social history, a psycho-educational evaluation and a classroom observation. Some students may need additional evaluations in the area of speech and language, occupational or physical therapy, or require functional behavioral assessments, and psychiatric evaluations.

**TIP:** If you know the child is experiencing delays in one or more of these other areas, you should specifically request the additional evaluation(s).

**TIP:** You may also submit outside evaluations if you have them.

### STEP 4: CSE Review (see also Tip Sheet #3, "Preparing for an IEP Meeting")

Once the evaluations are complete, the SBST or CSE will schedule a meeting to create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the student. The IEP contains a description of services the student should receive. The parent or surrogate parent is an important part of the IEP team and should attend this meeting. The parent can also ask any service providers (e.g., psychologists, tutors), teachers, caseworkers or anyone else who is familiar with the child's needs to participate in the meeting. At the meeting, the IEP team should discuss the results of the evaluations and any other relevant information. The team will then determine if the student has a disability and, if so, it will classify the student with one of 13 disabling conditions (some of the most common are learning disabled, emotionally disturbed and speech impaired). Finally, the team will make a recommendation for special education and related services and create an IEP for the student.

Among other things, the IEP should identify:

1. Student's present levels of performance.
  2. Student's strengths and weaknesses.
  3. How the student's disability affects his/her performance in school.
  4. Annual goals.
  5. Special education and related services needed to meet the student's goals.
  6. Testing accommodations, if needed.
- For more details on the IEP meeting, see Tip Sheet #3, "Preparing for an IEP Meeting."

### STEP 5: Placement

Once an IEP is created, the Department of Education (DOE) is obligated to offer an appropriate placement and provide all the services on the student's IEP. Services can vary and include general education with Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), related services, Collaborative Team Teaching classes, full- or part-time self-contained special education classes, non-public school, home or hospital instruction or residential placements. For a full description of the continuum of placements available, go to <http://www.nycenet.edu/offices/spss/sei/ctm/>.

**TIP:** On an initial referral, a parent must consent to special education services for his/her child before any services will be provided. The parent always has a right to visit a program before accepting that program.

**SAMPLE SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL**

DATE

Attn: CSE CHAIRPERSON  
Committee on Special Education  
Region \_\_\_\_

ADDRESS

Re: CHILD'S NAME  
DOB:  
School:

Dear CHAIRPERSON:

I am an employee of YOUR AGENCY'S NAME, a foster care agency, and I am writing to refer CHILD'S NAME to be evaluated for special education services. I am concerned that he/she has difficulties that are interfering with his/her ability to learn.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF WHY REFERRING – INCLUDE A LIST OF DIFFICULTIES THE STUDENT IS EXHIBITING, AS WELL AS CONCERNS YOU MAY HAVE WITH HIS/HER DEVELOPMENT.

It is important that he/she receive evaluations and a recommendation for services as soon as possible. Please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ with any questions.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

cc: SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST/PRINCIPAL

**TIP SHEET #2**

**Referrals to the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) for Preschool Special Education Services**

Preschool-aged children who have developmental delays or disabilities may be eligible for special education and related services.

**Eligibility**

- ▶ If the child turns 3 years old between January 1 and June 30, he/she is eligible for preschool services starting January 2.
- ▶ If the child turns 3 years old between July 1 and December 31, he/she is eligible for preschool services starting July 1.
- ▶ If the child has been receiving Early Intervention (EI) services, he/she should be evaluated for preschool special education services as early as possible so that there is no gap between EI and preschool services.

**Making the Referral to the CPSE**

A child should be referred to the CPSE for evaluations up to four months (120 days) before he/she becomes eligible to receive services.

**STEP 1: Referral**

Send a letter of referral to the regional CPSE office (see attached sample letter).

**TIP:** To determine the child's region, go to the Department of Education (DOE) website (<http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/default.htm>) and type in the child's address. The website will give you the child's zoned school, district and region. You may also call the Office of Zoning to determine the region and district of the child (212/374-5426).

**STEP 2: Consent for Evaluations**

Once the CPSE receives the referral, it should send:

- a) A notice that the referral was received;
- b) An official list of approved evaluation sites in NYC; and
- c) A "consent for initial evaluation" letter (also called a CIP letter).

**NOTE:** In order for a child to be evaluated, the child's parent must provide informed consent. Under current federal and State law, the definition of parent in the special education context is "a natural or adoptive parent, a guardian (but not the State if the child is a ward of the State), or a person acting in place of a parent, such as a grandparent or stepparent." If the child's natural parents' rights have been terminated or the agency has made every attempt to locate the parents and no parent can be found, then a surrogate parent should be appointed. The surrogate parent cannot be an employee of the agency, but can be the child's foster parent. *A foster parent cannot act as parent in the special education context unless the child's natural parents' rights have been terminated or the parent cannot be located.* (This may change in the future due to new federal legislation.)

### STEP 3: Evaluation

The caseworker should assist the child's parent in choosing an evaluation site and scheduling an initial appointment. The CPSE can also help locate an appropriate site. Once the consent form is given to the site, the site will begin the evaluation process. The child should be evaluated in all areas of suspected disability. If you feel the child needs any additional evaluations, you should ask for them.

### STEP 4: IEP Meeting (see also Tip Sheet #3, "Preparing for an IEP Meeting")

When the evaluations are complete, the CPSE will schedule a meeting to create an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP contains a description of services the student should receive. The parent or surrogate parent is an important part of the IEP team and should attend this meeting. The parent can also ask any service providers (e.g., psychologists, tutors), teachers, caseworkers or anyone else who is familiar with the child's needs to participate in the meeting. At the meeting, the IEP team should discuss the results of the evaluations and any other relevant information. The team will then determine if the student has a disability and, if so, classify the student with one of 13 disabling conditions (some of the most common are learning disabled, emotionally disturbed and speech impaired). Finally, the team will make a recommendation for special education and related services and create an IEP for the student.

### STEP 5: Consent to Services

After the CPSE recommends services, the parent (or surrogate parent) must consent to these services. Services will not begin until consent is obtained.

### STEP 6: Placement and/or Services

Once an IEP is created, the Department of Education (DOE) is obligated to offer an appropriate placement and provide all the services on the student's IEP as soon as possible. The CPSE will arrange for providers and services for the child. Recommended services can range from individual therapy provided in the home or a daycare setting to placement in a full day, center-based program.

**NOTE:** If the DOE is unable to provide all of the services on a child's IEP immediately, the CPSE may offer temporary partial services. Even if a parent accepts partial services, the DOE still has an obligation to provide all of the services on the student's IEP. If temporary services are accepted, make sure the child remains on the waiting list for the services he/she needs.

S A M P L E C P S E R E F E R R A L

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Attn: CPSE Administrator  
Committee on Preschool Special Education  
Region \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Re: STUDENT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Dear ADMINISTRATOR:

I am an employee of YOUR AGENCY'S NAME, a foster care agency, and I am writing to refer CHILD'S NAME to be evaluated for preschool special education services. I am enclosing copies of recent evaluations performed at our agency that indicate that this child is in need of services. (IF NO EVALUATIONS, PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WHY REFERRING.)

Child: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Foster Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send the CPSE packet and CLP form to the CHILD'S parent at the above address. Please send an additional copy to my attention at YOUR AGENCY'S ADDRESS. I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

\* See Tip Sheet #1 for definition of parent

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TIP SHEET #3

Preparing for an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) Meeting

A student's IEP is a very important document. It is the plan that outlines a student's needs and all the special education services that a student is entitled to receive. It is supposed to paint an accurate picture of a student's strengths as well as the ways in which a student's disability affects his/her ability to learn in school.

Here are some practical tips for preparing to attend an IEP meeting:

**Read the student's evaluations**

You, the child welfare professional, and the parent, should have copies of the student's evaluations prior to the meeting\*. You and the parent should read and understand all the evaluation reports, observations and progress reports. You may want to mark relevant parts of those documents that you wish to bring to the attention of the team during the meeting. Things to note are:

- The nature of the student's disability and how it affects him/her in school.
- The student's performance levels (academic, social, emotional, physical, etc.)
- The student's strengths and weaknesses.
- Any recommendations from the student's teachers, evaluators, other service providers or outside evaluators.

\*NOTE: Under current federal and State law, the definition of parent in the special education context is "a natural or adoptive parent, a guardian (but not the State if the child is a ward of the State), or a person acting in place of a parent, such as a grandparent or stepparent." If the child's natural parents' rights have been terminated or the agency has made every attempt to locate the parent and no parent can be found, a surrogate parent should be appointed. The surrogate parent cannot be an employee of the agency, but can be the child's foster parent. A foster parent cannot act as parent in the special education context unless the child's natural parents' rights have been terminated or the parent cannot be located. (This may change in the future due to new federal legislation.)

**Familiarize yourself with the NYC Department of Education's (DOE) continuum of special education services**

Special education services can vary and include general education with Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), related services,

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Collaborative Team Teaching classes, full- or part-time self-contained special education classes, non-public school, home or hospital instruction or residential placements. For a full description of the continuum of placements available to school age students, go to <http://www.nycenet.edu/offices/spss/sei/ctm/>

### **Invite any other relevant people to be part of the IEP team**

IEPs are created at meetings with an IEP team. The student's parent can ask any service providers (such as tutors or therapists), caseworkers, teachers or anyone else who knows the child and has relevant information to participate in the meeting. At the meeting, the IEP team should discuss the results of the evaluations and any other relevant information. Required members of the IEP team include:

- A student's parent.
- A special education teacher or provider and a general education teacher (at least one, and sometimes both, of these are required to be the student's teacher).
- A district representative.
- Someone who can interpret the student's evaluations.
- Depending on the type of review, additional members may be required to attend.

### **Understand what is included on the IEP**

Federal, State and local law mandate that the following things are to be included on an IEP:

- A description of the student's "present levels of educational performance," including a description of how the student's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- Measurable annual goals for the student to reach.
- A statement of the special education and related services needed for the student to meet his/her goals and to progress in the general curriculum, as well as to participate in extracurricular/non-academic activities.
- Testing accommodations and modifications and whether the child will participate in standardized tests.

New York City Department of Education  
**Contact Information for  
 Regional Committees of Special Education (CSEs)**  
<http://www.nycenet.edu/Parents/Essentials/Special+Education/contacts.htm>

REGION	DISTRICTS	ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER	REGIONAL CSE CHAIRPERSON
1	9, 10	One Fordham Plaza Bronx, N.Y. 10458	718/329-8000	Silene Nazario
2	8, 11, 12	3450 East Tremont Avenue, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Bronx, N.Y. 10465	718/794-7420	Michele Beatty
3	25, 26	30-48 Linden Place Flushing, N.Y. 11354	718/281-3520	Claudia Block
	28, 29	90-27 Sutphin Boulevard Jamaica, N.Y. 11435	718/557-2500	
4	24, 30, 32	28-11 Queens Plaza North, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor Long Island City, N.Y. 11101	718/391-8522	Paul Lomtevas
5	19, 23, 27	82-01 Rodway Boulevard Ozone Park, N.Y. 11416	718/642-5836	Sherri Schuman
		1655 St. Mark's Avenue Brooklyn, N.Y. 11233	718/922-4794 x 255	
6	17, 18, 22	5619 Flatlands Avenue Brooklyn, N.Y. 11234	718/968-6200	Cheryl Knobel
		1780 Ocean Avenue Brooklyn, N.Y. 11230	718/758-7600	
7	20, 21	415 89 <sup>th</sup> Street Brooklyn, N.Y. 11209	D20 718/759-4965 D21 718/759-4966	Claire Donnellan
	31	715 Ocean Terrace, Building A Staten Island, N.Y. 10301	718/420-5755	
8	13, 14, 15, 16	131 Livingston Street Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	718/935-4900	Deborah Cuffey-Jackson
9	1, 2, 4, 7	333 7 <sup>th</sup> Ave, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor New York, N.Y. 10001	917/339-1600	Gerry Donegan
10	3, 5, 6	2120 Amsterdam Avenue New York, N.Y. 10032	212/342-8300	Marilyn Spuecher

**Be an active member of the team at the IEP meeting**

You and the parent should have the opportunity to voice your opinions and be equal participants in the decision-making with the other team members. Neither of you should be asked to participate for only a portion of the meeting or to sign a pre-prepared IEP.

## TIP SHEET #4

**Requesting Special Education Records**

The NYC Department of Education (DOE) maintains files on every student in special education at the Committee on Special Education (CSE) offices in each region (see attached list). These files usually consist of special education evaluations, placement recommendations and IEPs. The special education files kept in the region are usually more complete than the files maintained at the schools; however, to be safe, you should also request records from the school principal or School-Based Support Team (SBST).

**\*NOTE:** Special education records are different from cumulative school records. If you need the child's report card, transcript, attendance or other cumulative records, such as an immunization history or suspension records, you should request these records from the school.

**STEP 1: Determine the region in which the student currently attends school**

The student's special education records are generally kept in the region in which the student is currently attending school.

**TIP:** To determine the region, you may do one of the following:

1. Contact the student's school and ask them the region.
2. Go to the DOE's website (<http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/default.htm>) and type in the child's school.
3. Call the Office of Zoning (212/374-5426) to determine the region and district based on the child's current school.

**\*NOTE:** If the student is not currently attending school, you should contact the region in which the student last attended school.

**STEP 2: Call the regional CSE office**

Call the regional CSE office and ask to speak with the records room. Give them the student's nine-digit student ID number or date of birth, and they can determine if they have the records. If they do not have the records, they should be able to determine which regional office does have the records. Finally, confirm the fax number and address.

**STEP 3: Send the request**

Write a letter based on the sample special education records request. Along with the written request, you must include an authorization for release of records from the student's parent\*. The agency is not entitled to a student's special education records and must get consent before requesting the file.

**\*NOTE:** Under current federal and state law, the definition of parent in the special education context is "a natural or adoptive parent, a guardian (but not the State if the child is a ward of the State), or a person acting in place of a parent, such as a grandparent or stepparent". If the child's natural parents' rights have been terminated or the agency has made every attempt to locate the parents and no parent can be found, a surrogate parent should be appointed. The surrogate parent cannot be an employee of the agency, but can be the child's foster parent. *A foster parent cannot act as a parent in the special education context unless the child's natural parents' rights have been terminated or the parent cannot be located.* (This may change in the future due to new federal legislation.)

**TIP:** Always make sure to put every request in writing and always get proof that the request was received.

**STEP 4: Follow up**

Depending on the office, records can take anywhere from a week to over a month to receive. It is always a good idea to follow up once a week with the records room manager to determine when the records will be sent.

## SAMPLE SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORD REQUEST

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Attn: RECORDS MANAGER  
Committee on Special Education  
Region \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Attn: SBST/Principal  
SCHOOL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Re: CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
NYC ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear RECORDS MANAGER:

I am writing to request a copy of the above-referenced student's file. Specifically, I am requesting the student's most recent IEP and his/her most recent evaluations, including any psycho-educational, educational, psychological, psychiatric, vocational, speech, OT and PT evaluations.

Please find enclosed an authorization for the release of records from the CHILD'S PARENT'S NAME. Please mail the file as soon as possible to my attention at YOUR AGENCY'S ADDRESS.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at YOUR PHONE NUMBER. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

## TIP SHEET #5

### Special Education Transportation

Obtaining appropriate transportation is often a major problem for children in foster care, especially when students move from home to home. Each time a student moves, his/her bus route must be changed. Often, this process takes days or weeks, and many students miss school during this time. This sheet is designed to assist child welfare professionals in making changes to special education bussing when students move from home to home.

#### Eligibility for Transportation:

- ▶ For children who receive special education services, transportation is a related service that should be included on the first page of a child's IEP. **Bussing is usually provided to students in self-contained or special education classes.**
- ▶ Special education students who are not in special education classes might be eligible for transportation, depending on their individual needs. In these situations, you most likely will need to show why the child needs transportation and ask that it be included on the IEP. If the child has any special transportation requirements (like an air-conditioned bus, limits on the time for the bus ride or a wheelchair lift), these should also be included on the IEP.
- ▶ Students with and without special education needs who attend general education classes and who do not have transportation as a related service on their IEP are entitled to transportation based on the eligibility requirements in Chancellor's Regulation A-801. This regulation can be found at <http://docs.nycenet.edu/dscgi/admin.py/Get/File-485/A-801.pdf>.

\*NOTE: If a student is eligible for transportation, he/she is entitled to receive it.

When a student who is entitled to special education transportation moves from home to home, changes need to be made to his/her transportation or bussing so that he/she does not miss days or weeks of school. Here are some practical tips for getting a student's transportation changed quickly.

**STEP 1: Determine the region in which the student currently attends school**

Each school is located within a region. The CSE for that region is responsible for arranging transportation for a student receiving special education services. If a student who is entitled to special education transportation is moving to another home or changing schools, the agency should immediately alert the CSE that a change in transportation will be needed.

**TIP:** To determine the region do one of the following:

- a) Contact the student's school and ask them the region.
- b) Go to the DOE website (<http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/default.htm>) and type in the student's school.
- c) Call the Office of Zoning (212/374-5426) to determine the region and district based on the student's school.

**NOTE:** If the student has transferred to a school in a new region, contact the new region.

**STEP 2: Write a letter to the region**

Contact the placement office in the region and alert them to the change in address or school. If the student is moving to a new home, the agency will then have to send a formal letter to the CSE stating the change in address (see attached sample transportation letter). This letter can also be sent to the school the student attends.

**NOTE:** If the student attends a District 75 program for severely disabled students, the change in address and request for change in transportation is typically done at the school level.

**STEP 3: Request a change in transportation**

At this point the CSE must change the student's address in the DOE computer system and send a request for a change in transportation to the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT).

**STEP 4: Changing the student's bus route**

OPT should receive the request within 24 hours and then alert one of the office inspectors to reroute the student to a bus that best meets his/her needs. OPT often states that this takes three to seven business days, but if you contact them directly (718/392-8855) they can sometimes expedite the process.

**TIP:** Once the CSE requests the change from OPT, you should send a letter to the OPT office encouraging them to expedite the rerouting process (see attached sample OPT letter). Faxing the letter is the best way to ensure that they receive it.

**STEP 5: New bus route**

Once the student has been rerouted, the new bus company will contact the foster parents and inform them of the new route and pick up time. If there are any difficulties with the new bus company or route, the foster parent or agency should contact OPT and file a complaint with one of the borough inspectors.

## SAMPLE TRANSPORTATION LETTER

DATE

Attn: CSE Chairperson  
Committee on Special Education  
Region \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS

Re: CHILD'S NAME  
DOB:  
NYC ID#:

Dear CSE CHAIRPERSON:

CHILD'S NAME is currently under the supervision of YOUR AGENCY'S NAME. He/she recently moved into a new home and now resides with his/her (foster) parents, \_\_\_\_\_, at CHILD'S NEW ADDRESS. He/she is currently enrolled in a special education class at CHILD'S SCHOOL NAME located at SCHOOL'S ADDRESS and will continue attending this program. In order to ensure that he/she does not miss any school, please expedite the change in home address and immediately provide him/her with the appropriate transportation.

Thank you for your immediate attention to these matters. I can be reached at YOUR PHONE NUMBER.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

## SAMPLE OFFICE OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION LETTER

DATE

Attn: BOROUGH SUPERVISOR  
Office of Pupil Transportation  
44-36 Vernon Boulevard  
Long Island City, NY 11101

Re: CHILD'S NAME  
DOB:  
NYC ID#:

To BOROUGH SUPERVISOR:

I am writing with regard to the above referenced student. He/she moved to a new home recently and is enrolled at SCHOOL NAME. This student needs immediate transportation in order to continue attending school. The regional office has requested a change in his/her bus route. Please expedite the change in transportation for STUDENT to ensure that he/she does not miss any school.

Please contact me as soon as him/her has been rerouted. I can be reached at YOUR NUMBER. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

### **Legal Representation and Educational Resources for Children and Youth in Foster Care**

#### **Advocates for Children**

**[www.advocatesforchildren.org](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org)**

212/947-9779

Works on behalf of children from infancy to age 21 who are at greatest risk for school-based discrimination and/or academic failure, including children in foster care. The AFC Education Hotline takes calls Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

#### **Inside Schools**

**[www.insideschools.org](http://www.insideschools.org)**

Contains independent reviews of the NYC public schools along with many valuable tips to navigate the NYC educational bureaucracy.

#### **Legal Aid Society**

**[www.legal-aid.org](http://www.legal-aid.org)**

212/977-3330

The Kathryn A. McDonald Education Advocacy Project (EAP)

212/577-3318 or 3342

Providing Educational Assistance to Kids (PEAK)

718/250-4510

The EAP provides early intervention, preschool and school-age special education advocacy to children who are the subject of active child protective proceedings in one of the NYC Family Courts, and are represented by a law guardian from the Juvenile Rights Division. PEAK provides a broad range of education advocacy services, including representation at superintendent's suspension hearings on behalf of children who are represented by the Juvenile Rights Division in a delinquency, PINS or child protective matter.

#### **Legal Services for Children**

**[www.kidslaw.org](http://www.kidslaw.org)**

212/683-7999

Provides free legal assistance for special education issues to disadvantaged children in New York City. Intake hours are between 10:00 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday.

#### **Least Restrictive Environment Coalition**

**[www.lrecoalition.org](http://www.lrecoalition.org)**

Provides general information and resources for parents of children with special needs. Includes helpful definitions of commonly used terms.

#### **New York City Department of Education**

**[www.nycenet.edu](http://www.nycenet.edu)**

Includes statistical information on all the schools in the City, as well as the Chancellor's Regulations, and a variety of other helpful resources about the public school system. You can also call 311 (or 212/NEW-YORK if you are calling from outside the City) to determine a child's appropriate school zone or region, obtain DOE phone numbers and request other DOE information.

#### **Resources for Children with Special Needs**

**[www.resourcesnyc.org](http://www.resourcesnyc.org)**

212/677-4650

Provides information, referrals, advocacy, training and support for parents of New York City children with special needs and disabilities.

#### **Sinergia, Inc.**

**[www.sinergiany.org](http://www.sinergiany.org)**

212/496-1300

Provides free and low cost legal services and advocacy on special education services and rights.

This publication provides information concerning the New York City school system and students' educational entitlements; however, information contained in this publication is not comprehensive and does not constitute legal advice. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney. In many cases, this publication may summarize existing policies and laws. The fact that information appears in this publication does not necessarily suggest the authors' agreement with such policies or laws.

This publication was written prior to the passage of the 2004 revision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and does not reflect any changes to the Act.