



AFC'S

# Know Your Rights

A GUIDE TO THE LEGAL RIGHTS  
OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN NEW  
YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

August 2023



Advocates for Children of New York  
Protecting every child's right to learn

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Enrolling in School .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Applying to public school and school choice .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Services for English Language Learners (ELLs).....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Special Education &amp; Students with Disabilities.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Suspensions.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Promotion and Graduation.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Discrimination .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>How do I get involved in my child’s education? .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>What are my rights as a parent? .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Who do I speak with at the DOE about my concerns and questions?.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Family Welcome Centers .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Who do I go to for immigration assistance? .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Important terms &amp; acronyms.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Advocacy tips.....</b>	<b>25</b>

This guide does not constitute legal advice. This guide attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of AFC. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

# INTRODUCTION

This guide is meant to give immigrant families a basic overview of their rights in the New York City public school system and is primarily meant for parents of school-age children, from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade.

As you read through the guide, there are 6 basic rights to keep in mind:

## **THE BIG 6: Your Rights in the NYC Public School System**

- 1. Your child has the right to go to school regardless of their immigration status, or your family's immigration status.**
- 2. If your child needs help learning English, you have the right to choose either a bilingual or English as a New Language (ENL) program.**
- 3. You have the right to apply to public schools of your choice for elementary, middle, and high school.**
- 4. You have the right to receive school-related information translated into your preferred language.**
- 5. You have the right to be told if your child is at risk of suspension or repeating a grade.**
- 6. Your child is entitled to receive an education without being discriminated because of their race, immigration status, country of origin, or ethnicity.**

*If you have additional questions after reading this guide, call*

**AFC's Education Helpline**

**866-427-6033 (toll free) • Monday—Thursday • 10am—4pm**

*We can speak to you in YOUR language.*

# ENROLLING IN SCHOOL

## ***When can my child attend school?***

Children ages 4 to 21 have the right to attend public school no matter where they were born or what language they speak. In New York City (NYC), children as young as 3 may receive education services if programs have space available.

All children ages 4 to 21 who apply to public school should be admitted and placed in an appropriate program within 5 school days. An eligible child cannot be turned away from kindergarten. Also, there is a pre-K seat available for every four-year-old in NYC.

Teenagers cannot be turned away from high school or sent to a high school equivalency diploma preparation program because of their age, limited prior education, or because they are English Language Learners.

## ***Immigration status does not matter.***

Immigrant students have the right to attend school regardless of their immigration status or their family's immigration status. Although some school forms may ask for a social security number, parents and students do **NOT** have to give this information.

Immigrant students can receive all school services for which they are eligible, including free lunch, free breakfast, and transportation.

No one in the school may ask about a child's or family's immigration status. If the school does learn about a child's or family's immigration status, they will not share this information with anyone. The DOE will not release student information unless absolutely required by law. Federal agents, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), cannot enter schools unless absolutely required by law.

### **TIP:**

If asked for your Social Security number, fill in 000-00-0000.

## ***Where should I enroll my child?***

Your child must live in NYC in order to attend a NYC public school. If your child is entering elementary or middle school, they may attend their zoned school. To find out what school your child is zoned for, dial 311. You can also visit your local Family Welcome Center to explore other school options for your child. If your child is entering high school, you can visit your local Family Welcome Center for assistance enrolling your child into high school. Family Welcome Center contact information can

be found on page 21 of this guide.

## ***Important Documents***

Bring these with you to enroll your child in school:

1. **Proof of residence**, such as a gas, cable, electric, or water bill, or a lease. CAREFUL, telephone bills, credit card bills, driver's licenses etc. CANNOT be used as proof. Two to three documents are required, depending on the type of document. See a [complete list of documents that are accepted](#) as proof of residency on the DOE's website.
2. **Proof of your child's age**, such as your child's birth certificate or passport.
3. Your child's **immunization record**, if available.
4. If available, your child's **most recent report card/transcript, Individualized Education Program (IEP), or 504 Accommodation Plan** – see page 10 for details about these items.

## ***What if my child does not have school records or has spent little or no time in school?***

They still have the right to be immediately admitted into public school. An admissions counselor or other staff member at the school your child will attend should create a student profile and evaluate your child in the language they speak. If no one on staff speaks your child's language, the school should arrange for interpretation.

## ***What if my child's record/transcript is from a school in another country?***

Have your child's foreign school record/transcript translated by the school they will attend, the Department of Education, or an outside source (e.g. your consulate, a community organization, or private service). The school will then evaluate the translated document and determine your child's grade.

***In the meantime, your child must be admitted to school.***



# APPLYING TO PUBLIC SCHOOL AND SCHOOL CHOICE

## *What is School Choice?*

Although your child may be assigned to their neighborhood or “zoned” school, you have a choice about what school – and type of school! – your child attends. You should research schools, visit any that interest you, and submit an application on your child’s behalf. Immigrant students and students learning English are eligible to attend all NYC public schools including:

- **Charter Schools:** Privately managed public schools. You must apply and admission is by lottery.
- **Magnet Schools:** Unzoned public schools with special programs (e.g. arts, technology, science). You must apply.
- **International High Schools:** Public schools where all students are immigrants.
- **Gifted and Talented Education programs:** Public schools with special advanced programs. Your child must take an exam to be accepted. Testing accommodations are available for ELLs and former ELLs.

For more information on applying to schools, please call our Helpline or visit the [DOE’s website on school choice](#).

## *Can I transfer my child to a different school?*

You must make a request to transfer schools in writing. The three most common types of transfers are (1) Medical Transfers, (2) Safety Transfers, and (3) Transportation Hardship Transfers (commuting by public transportation for 90 minutes or more in each direction). Where your other children attend school may be considered in transfer requests as well.

It is important to note that these transfers are **very** difficult to get. More information can be found on the [DOE’s website](#).

### **TIP:**

Use the search tool at [www.insideschools.org](http://www.insideschools.org) to look up and compare different public and charter schools in NYC.

# SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLS)

All students have the right to public education, regardless of how well they speak English. Students learning English are entitled to special instruction to teach them English. These students are called “English Language Learners” (ELLs).

The most common types of instruction are **Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or English as a New Language (ENL)**. **Dual Language (DL)** programs may also be offered to ELLs.

## *Is my child eligible for ELL Services?*

Once your child enters a NYC school, you must fill out a **Home Language Identification Survey (HLIS)** with the help of a teacher or administrator. This survey asks about the languages you speak in your home and that your child speaks. A teacher then interviews you and your child in your home language and in English, and reviews your child’s past work, if available.

If eligible, your child then takes a test in English, called the **New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)** to find out the level of your child’s English abilities. This test should be given to your child within the first 10 days of enrolling in school. If your child does not pass the NYSITELL, they are eligible for ELL services.

ELLs must also take the **New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)** once every year in the spring.

Once your child scores a certain level on the NYSESLAT, they will no longer be considered an ELL and will no longer receive ENL, TBE or DL instruction.



## Telling the Difference Between ELL Programs

1. **Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE):** Instruction is given in both English and the student's home language. The amount of English used increases as the student becomes more proficient.
2. **English as a New Language (ENL):** Students are taught entirely in English and learn to speak, read, and write English from a trained teacher. (Most new immigrant students are in ENL classes).
3. **Dual language (DL):** ELLs and native English speakers learn together in one classroom so that all of the students in the class will become proficient in both English and the second language. Each school has its own unique admissions process. Most dual language programs in NYC teach Spanish as a second language, but a few teach Chinese, Haitian Creole, Russian, Korean, French, Arabic, Bengali, Urdu, Japanese, Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish.

More information about [language programs offered for ELLs](#) is available on the DOE's website. You can also find a [list of TBE and DL programs](#) near you.

### *Can I choose my child's ELL program?*

**YES.** You have the right to choose between TBE, DL and ENL. While most schools have ENL classes, TBE and DL classes are less common. If another school in your child's district offers the TBE or Dual Language program you want and has space in the program, you have the right to transfer your child to that school. Your child is also entitled to free transportation to attend that school. If you would like to transfer your child, make the request through your current school or Family Welcome Center.

Schools are required to create a bilingual program in a new language based on the number of ELLs in a particular grade:

- Elementary and Middle school: 15+ ELLs in the same grade **OR** within 2 grades of one another using the same home language
- High School: 20+ ELLs in **ONE** grade using the same home language.

#### **TIP:**

ENL programs must be tailored to each child's individual English language abilities. This means not every ENL student in the same class has to receive the same ENL curriculum! If your child has more advanced English skills than their classmates, they are entitled to a more advanced level of instruction.

You can ask your child's school to create a bilingual program if the school has the above-specified number of ELLs.

**If no school in your child's district offers a bilingual program in your child's language, your child must take ENL.**

### ***Will my child's school contact me about ELL programs?***

**YES.** Under NYS law, you must be notified within 5 school days of your child being identified as an ELL. Prior to your child's enrollment in a bilingual or ENL program, you have the right to:

1. An orientation session that explains the different program options;
2. A description of state standards and tests, and requirements for TBE, DL and ENL programs; and
3. All information provided in your preferred language. If you have any problems, please call our Helpline.

### ***Is my child eligible for language services after they are no longer an ELL?***

**YES.** For at least 2 years after becoming proficient in English (based on NYSESLAT scores), former ELLs must receive 90 minutes per week of integrated ENL (instruction to build English language skills through content area instruction, such as science or Math) or other former ELL support services.



#### **TIP:**

School personnel must meet with parents of ELLs / at least once a year to discuss the child's language development, progress and needs.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION & STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

## ***What is special education?***

Special education is a program providing specialized instruction, supports, and services for students who have disabilities. Such disabilities can range from learning and behavioral difficulties to very severe physical and intellectual disabilities. Special education students can be taught either with non-disabled peers in a general education classroom **OR** in a separate classroom for students with disabilities. Depending on a student's needs, a student may also receive "related services" such as occupational therapy, physical therapy or counseling.

For a more detailed explanation of the NYC special education system and the rights of students with disabilities, see **AFC's Guide to Special Education**, available in: [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), and [Bengali](#).

## ***How can my child receive special education services?***

You can request that your child be evaluated for special education. You must make this request in writing and address it to the chairperson of your school district's Committee on Special Education (CSE), or your school's principal.

School staff can also refer your child for special education services. The referral must be in writing and document the ways in which the school tried to help your child through general education services (e.g., ENL, tutoring, afterschool programs, behavior strategies) before considering special education. You must also give written consent in order for your child to be evaluated for special education.

## ***How do ELLs receive special education services?***

Your child is entitled to special education services immediately, no matter how long they have lived in the United States.

**Your child CANNOT be referred to special education just because they do not speak English well.**

You have the right to refer your child for special education at any time. ELLs must be

evaluated in both English and their home language. You have the right to request a Bilingual Special Education Evaluation if your child's main language is not English. Once your child is evaluated, you will meet with a team of professionals at the school to discuss whether your child needs special education. This team should include a teacher or related services provider certified to teach English to speakers of other languages or to provide bilingual services. If your child is eligible for special education services, the team will create an Individualized Education Program (IEP). This is a document that will describe your child's program, services and educational goals.

## ***Can my child receive ELL services in Special Education?***

**YES.** If your child is an ELL they must receive both special education and ELL services.

### **NOTE:**

Infants and toddlers age 0 to 3 with developmental delays are entitled to evaluations for Early Intervention (EI) Program services. To refer a child for EI, call 311 and see **AFC's Guide to Early Intervention**, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

## ***Can my child get bilingual special education services?***

**YES.** Bilingual Special Education includes many different services, such as bilingual special education classrooms that teach in English and your child's home language and bilingual related services, including bilingual speech language therapy, physical therapy, or counseling in your child's home language. For more information, see AFC's guide on ELLs and Special Education, available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Bengali](#), [Chinese](#), [French](#), [Haitian Creole](#), [Russian](#), and [Urdu](#).

### **WARNING:**

A school **should not** change your child's IEP simply because they do not offer the appropriate services or programs that your child needs (including ELL services)!

## ***What if a bilingual special education class is not available at my child's school?***

Your child may:

1. Be temporarily placed in an English-only special education class with ENL instruction;

2. Have a bilingual paraprofessional in class to interpret for her; or
3. Be transferred to a school that has bilingual special education services or a bilingual classroom. You should inform the school that you would like this transfer. You can also email the DOE at [BSEprograms@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:BSEprograms@schools.nyc.gov) for assistance.

## ***Can I request translations of my child's special education documents?***

**YES.** You have the right to have all IEPs, evaluation results, and notices about special education translated into your preferred language. You also have the right to have interpreters at meetings. You may request these translation and interpretation services from your child's school. If services are not provided, please contact our Helpline. You may also file a complaint with the Department of Education (DOE) by calling **(718) 935-2013**.

## ***What if my child's school does not provide the services on their IEP?***

If your child is not receiving the class, service, and/or language supports that they need, you can file an impartial hearing request to receive an order that would require the DOE to provide the needed services.

## ***How do I file an Impartial Hearing Request?***

You can send a written request to the Impartial Hearing Office by email at [IHOQuest@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:IHOQuest@schools.nyc.gov) or by mailing a copy:

NY State Education Department  
P-12 Office of Special Education  
89 Washington Avenue –Room 309EB  
Albany, NY 12234

### **TIP:**

You have the right to an interpreter at impartial hearings and should request one before the hearing date.

The DOE's website provides [information about how to file](#) an impartial hearing request. You can also learn more from **AFC's Guide to Special Education Impartial Hearings**, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

# SUSPENSIONS

A suspension is the removal of a child from the classroom. There are two types of suspensions:

- **Principals' Suspensions** – which last up to 5 days, and
- **Superintendents' Suspensions** – which can last up to 1 year. Superintendents' suspensions may lead to expulsion if the suspended student is over 17 years old on the first day of school. Students are suspended from school if they are seen as a danger to themselves or others. ELLs can be suspended.

If your child is suspended, they have the right to receive all homework, classwork, and instruction at an alternate site during the suspension.

## ***What should I do if my child is suspended?***

If your child is suspended, you have the right to be immediately notified orally and in writing of the specific charges against your child. You also have the right to all documented evidence against your child. **This information should be provided in a language that you understand.**

You also have the right to have a **suspension conference** (for a principal's suspension) **or a hearing** (for a superintendent's suspension). Parents and students have the right to bring a representative or advocate to suspension conferences and hearings. To request representation, you may call AFC's Helpline at (866) 427-6033 or Legal Services NYC at (917) 661-4500.



### **TIP:**

If your child is disabled and has been suspended, please call our Helpline. There are special procedures that you have the right to know about and participate in if this occurs.

# PROMOTION AND GRADUATION

[Chancellor's Regulation A-501](#) lists promotion guidelines for each grade level. The guidelines are translated into Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu.

## ***What does my child need to do to be promoted from one grade to the next?***

Although we encourage you to read the detailed promotion guidelines on the DOE website, the chart below lists the basic promotion criteria by grade:

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Basic Criteria</b>
Kindergarten – 2nd Grade	School staff make decisions whether to promote your child with your input.
3rd – 8th Grade	Promotion decisions are made based on a review of test scores, course grades, report cards, student projects and assignments. State test scores should not be a major factor in promotion decisions.
9th – 12th Grade (High School)	Promotion is based on attendance and the number of credits a student has: 8 credits to enter 10th grade 20 credits to enter 11th grade 30 credits to enter 12th grade

## ***Can ELLs be held back in school?***

**YES.** ELLs can be held back if they fail a grade or do not meet the specific promotion criteria for their grade. ELLs CANNOT be held back solely because they do not speak English well.

Two groups of ELLs are exempt from the promotion standards:

1. ELLs in grades 3-7 who have been in a U.S. public school for less than 2 years and ELLs in grade 8 who have been in a U.S. public school for less than 1 year;  
**AND**
2. Special education students (including ELLs) whose IEPs state that they are exempt **OR** that modified promotion criteria will be used.

## ***How will my child's school contact me if they are at risk of being held back?***

There are three times during the year where your school may notify you if your child is at risk of being held back:

- The Fall Parent Teacher Conference
- In writing by February 15th (called a "Promotion in Doubt" Letter)
- In writing by mail before the end of the school year.

### ***Warning:***

Even if a school fails to notify you, the school can still hold your child back.

## ***Can I appeal the school's decision to hold my child back?***

YES. If you disagree with the school's decision, you may submit a written appeal to the principal. The superintendent then reviews the principal's decision and makes a final determination.

## ***What does my child need to do to graduate from high school?***

Your child must complete 44 credits and pass 4 Regents exams (in English, Math, Social Studies, and Science) with scores of 65 or above, and a 5th state-approved exam of the student's choice (such as an extra Regents exam, Advanced Placement exam, Career and Technical Education (CTE) exam). There are special scoring options available for students with disabilities and ELLs.

ELLs do not have to pass the NYSESLAT to graduate; **however**, they must pass their English Regents exam in English. If an ELL cannot understand other subject areas in English, they may be able to take their other exams in their preferred language.

For more information, see **AFC's [High School Promotion and Graduation for ELLs](#)** handout, available in English, Spanish, Bengali, Chinese, and Haitian Creole.



# DISCRIMINATION

It is against the law for a school to discriminate against you or your child on the basis of your race, color, ethnicity, country of origin, religion or immigration status.

## ***What is Discrimination?***

Here are a few examples:

- A staff person at the public school where you want to enroll your child tells you that your child can't attend because they are not an American.
- Your child tells you that a teacher told them to "go back to their own country."

## **If you feel that you or your child have been discriminated against or harassed you may file a complaint with any of these agencies:**

- NYC DOE Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO): (718) 935-3320  
*Complaints must be filed with the OEO within one year of the event which is the subject of the complaint.*
- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights: (646) 428-3900
- New York City Commission on Human Rights: (718) 722-3131

## ***How does the DOE protect my child against bullying?***

The DOE does not allow students to behave in a way that could make other students feel unsafe or that could cause them physical injury or emotional harm.

The DOE also does not allow behavior that could interfere with another student's education, mental or emotional wellbeing, or physical wellbeing.

Every public school has a staff person who serves as the Respect for All (RFA) liaison. You can report bullying to the RFA liaison or you can file a report online at <https://www.nycenet.edu/bullyingreporting>.



School staff are not allowed to bully, harass, or discriminate against students. Parents and students may report this behavior by telling the principal, calling the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) at (718) 935-3800, or filing an online report with OSI at <https://www.nycenet.edu/cpu/home/complaint>.

**If you feel that you or your child is being bullied:**

- **Immediately report the incident to the school, or;**
- If you do not feel comfortable reporting the incident to school staff, or if you made a report to school staff but the behavior has continued, you can email the **Office of School and Youth Development (OSYD)** at [respectforall@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:respectforall@schools.nyc.gov)



# HOW DO I GET INVOLVED IN MY CHILD'S EDUCATION?

There are many ways you can participate in your child's education. Some examples include:

- Joining a **Parent or Parent-Teacher Association (PA/PTA)**. Every school has one of these organizations and consults them in all decisions. However, PAs and PTAs cannot make final decisions about school operation.
- Contacting your school's **Parent Coordinator** if your school has one. Parent Coordinators help address parents' concerns and support parent involvement.
- Participating in a **School Leadership Team**. These are school-based organizations that are present in every school. Equal numbers of parents and staff meet at least once a month to plan and decide on school policies related to the budget, curriculum, ELL services, etc.
- Participating in a **TITLE I Parent Advisory Council**: a federal program to improve the achievement of low-income and minority children, including ELLs. Contact the Parent Coordinator at your school for more information.
- Applying to join a **Community or Citywide Education Council (CEC)**: 32 bodies across NYC that shape educational policies and priorities in their respective public school districts. You can find more information about joining a CEC on the DOE's website at: <http://nycparentleaders.org>.
- Applying to join the **Citywide Council on English Language Learners(CCELL)**: <https://www.ccell.org>.
- Joining a **community-based organization** that is focused on improving and supporting public education in NYC.

# WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PARENT?

- You have the right to **receive school-related information** (progress reports, report cards, notices etc.) **in your preferred language**. These services should be available in at least Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu.
- You have the right to **attend parent-teacher conferences with translation and interpretation** assistance. Schools should post notices stating how you can receive these services. Ask your school's Parent Coordinator or Principal for this information if you don't see these notices in your child's school.
- You have the right to **access a copy of all of your child's school records**. These records must be given to you immediately and no later than 45 calendar days after you make the request. You also have the right to appeal or amend any information in your child's records.
- You have the right to **be involved in your child's school** community and government.

Unfortunately, parents often do not receive the translation and interpretation services they need. If you have this problem, you can call our Helpline, or file a complaint by calling the **DOE's language access complaint line** at (718) 935-2013.



# WHO DO I SPEAK WITH AT THE DOE ABOUT MY CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS?

*If you have a problem with the services your child is receiving at school, including ELL services, speak with:*

## **At Your Child's School:**

- Your child's teacher
- The school's Parent Coordinator
- The school's Language Access Coordinator
- The school's Respect for All Liaison
- The school principal

## **Outside of Your Child's School:**

All NYC public schools are overseen by superintendents. If you cannot resolve an issue or get help at your child's school, you can contact the Superintendent's Office for your child's school for assistance.

Aside from the superintendent, you can speak with a Family Support Coordinator for assistance to help you resolve any issues at your child's school.

## **GET IN TOUCH**

Find your school's district contacts by using the [DOE school directory](#).



# FAMILY WELCOME CENTERS

Contact your local Family Welcome Center to register your child in school. Family Welcome Centers are open from 8am—3pm, Monday—Friday. Translation and interpretation services are available at Family Welcome Centers.:

Borough	District(s) Served	Address & Email	Phone Number
<b>Bronx</b>	7, 9, 10	1 Fordham Plaza, 7th Floor <a href="mailto:FordhamFWC@schools.nyc.gov">FordhamFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-329-8050
	8, 11, 12	1230 Zerega Ave, Room 24 <a href="mailto:ZeregaFWC@schools.nyc.gov">ZeregaFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-828-7546
<b>Brooklyn</b>	17, 18, 22	1780 Ocean Avenue, 3rd Floor <a href="mailto:OceanFWC@schools.nyc.gov">OceanFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-758-7744
	20, 21	415 89th Street, 5th Floor <a href="mailto:89thFWC@schools.nyc.gov">89thFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-759-3900
	19, 23, 32	1665 St. Mark's Avenue, Room 116 <a href="mailto:StMarksFWC@schools.nyc.gov">StMarksFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-240-3609
	13, 14, 15, 16	355 Park Place <a href="mailto:ParkPlaceFWC@schools.nyc.gov">ParkPlaceFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-623-5069
<b>Manhattan</b>	1, 2, 4	333 7th Avenue, 12th Fl., Room 1211 <a href="mailto:333FWC@schools.nyc.gov">333FWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	917-339-1763
	3, 5, 6	123 Morningside Drive, Room 235 <a href="mailto:MorningsideFWC@schools.nyc.gov">MorningsideFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	332-228-0312
<b>Queens</b>	24, 30	28-11 Queens Plaza North, 3rd Fl. <a href="mailto:QueensPlazaNFWC@schools.nyc.gov">QueensPlazaNFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-391-6270
	25, 26	30-48 Linden Place, 2nd Floor <a href="mailto:LindenFWC@schools.nyc.gov">LindenFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-281-3538
	27, 28, 29	90-27 Sutphin Boulevard, 1st Floor <a href="mailto:SutphinFWC@schools.nyc.gov">SutphinFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-557-2786
<b>Staten Island</b>	31	715 Ocean Terrace, Building A <a href="mailto:PetridesFWC@schools.nyc.gov">PetridesFWC@schools.nyc.gov</a>	718-420-5654

# WHO DO I GO TO FOR IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE?

**CUNY Citizenship Now** centers offer free immigration services by appointment.

<b>CUNY Immigration Center</b>	<b>Language (s) Spoken</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Address</b>
Hostos Community College	English, Spanish	718-518-4395	Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm 2-5pm	427 Walton Ave., T-501 Bronx, NY 10451
Medgar Evers College	English, Spanish, Polish	718-270-6292	Mon-Fri, 9am-1:15pm 1:45-4pm	1150 Carroll St., Rm 226 Brooklyn, NY 11225
City College	English, Spanish, Italian	212-650-6620	Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm	160 Convent Ave., North Academic Center, Rm 1-206 New York, NY 10031
CUNY in the Heights	English, Spanish	646-664-9350	Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm	5030 Broadway, Ste. H202 New York, NY 10034
Flushing	English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish	718-640-9223	Mon-Fri, 9:30am-1pm 2-4:30pm	39-07 Prince St., Ste. 2B Flushing, NY 11354
York College	English, Spanish	646-664-9400	Mon-Fri, 9:00am- 4:00pm	94-20 Guy Brewer Blvd. Jamaica, NY 11451
El Centro Del Immigrante	English, Spanish	347-825-2086	Mon-Sat 7:00am- 12pm	260 Port Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10302

**The Door, Legal and Immigration Services:**

The Legal Services Center serves youth ages 12-21. Email [legalhelp@door.org](mailto:legalhelp@door.org) or call 212-941-9090, ext. 3280.

**Legal Aid Society, Immigration Project:**

Immigration Law Unit Hotline for detained immigrants, available Monday through Friday, from 9am-5pm: 1-844-955-3425. Non-detained immigrants with pending Immigration Court cases should call 212-577-3300.

**Catholic Charities:**

Legal Orientation Program for Custodians (LOPC) Hotline for custodians of unaccompanied minors: 1-888-996-3848 (Monday through Friday, 9am-8pm).

**New York State (NYS):**

New Americans Hotline: 1-800-566-7636 (toll-free in NYS, Monday through Friday, 9am-8pm).

**Arab American Association of New York:**

Immigration services—free consultations and low cost services (Wednesdays, 3pm-6pm). Email [info@arabamericanny.org](mailto:info@arabamericanny.org) or call 718-745-3523 for assistance.

**UnLocal, Inc.:**

Immigration Services - free legal advice and representation on immigration-related matters. Email [info@unlocal.org](mailto:info@unlocal.org) or call (646) 216-8210 for assistance.

# IMPORTANT TERMS & ACRONYMS

**Chancellor’s Regulations** — the official rules for NYC public schools

**DL** — Dual Language program

**EI** — Early Intervention program services

**ELL** — English Language Learner

**ENL** — English as a New Language

**HLIS** — Home Language Identification Survey, identifies a child’s dominant language

**IEP** — Individualized Education Program

**NYSITELL** — New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners, determines students’ listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities in English.

**NYSESLAT** — New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, tests students’ English reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

**PA/PTA** — Parents Association/Parent-Teacher Association

**TBE** — Transitional Bilingual Education

**UPK** — Universal Pre-Kindergarten



**This guide and additional resources on educational services in New York City are available on our website, [www.advocatesforchildren.org](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org).**

## ADVOCACY TIPS

- ✓ **Keep your child's school documents** (such as IEPs and evaluations) and all letters and reports from school in a file, arranged by date.
- ✓ **Put it in writing:** Keep a notebook for yourself with dates and times of all meetings and communications with school staff and outside clinicians (such as doctors or therapists); follow up on conversations in writing, by letter, or by email, and keep a copy so you have a record.
- ✓ **Send all important information by certified mail,** return receipt requested or by email so you have proof it was sent.
- ✓ **Talk with the people who work with your child.** Speak to teachers when things are going well or if things are going poorly and you will establish yourself as a concerned and involved parent.
- ✓ **Be persistent.** If someone says there is nothing that can be done for your child, get a second opinion.
- ✓ **Maintain a productive conversation.** Even when you are angry about something that has happened, try to speak calmly when making your point.
- ✓ **Bring along a friend,** family member, or someone who knows your child outside of school to school meetings if you feel your perspective is not being heard by the DOE.

## **Our Mission**



AFC promotes access to the best education New York can provide for all students, especially students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. We use uniquely integrated strategies to advance systemic reform, empower families and communities, and advocate for the educational rights of individual students.

### **Still have more questions?**

#### **Please Call**

#### **The Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline**

Monday through Thursday

10AM to 4PM

866-427-6033 (toll free)

#### **Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.**

151 West 30th Street, 5th Floor

New York, NY 10001

Phone (212) 947-9779

Fax (212) 947-9790

[info@advocatesforchildren.org](mailto:info@advocatesforchildren.org)

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