

"In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education."

- Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

The Arc of Delaware County is a nonprofit, voluntary, organization that provides free education advocacy for any Delaware County student with mental retardation or any developmental disability.



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? Well... the Arc of Delaware County has an Education Advocate who is versed in the law and familiar with the school districts in Delaware County. Kathy Zepka will be happy to talk with you, offer referrals, advice, suggestions and accompany you to all meetings for your child - at no cost. Please feel free to call her at 610.544.6600.

The Arc of Delaware County
740 S. Chester Rd Suite G
Swarthmore, PA 19081



*Your First Call
for Education
Advocacy*



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

610.544.6600
610.544.8916 (fax)

*Providing Advocacy Resources, and
Community for Delaware County's
Children and Adults with
Developmental Disabilities & Their
Families since 1956.*

Free Appropriate Public Education

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).

You must request in writing that the school district perform a **multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE)**, if you suspect that your child is an exceptional student requiring accommodations or **specialty designed instructions (SDI)** to make meaningful educational progress in school.

You will receive an **evaluation report (ER)** outlining the results of the **MDE** process when the **MDE** is completed. The **ER** should include parental input, testing and assessment results from a **certified school psychologist**, input from your child's teachers, and recommendations about your child's educational needs. The **MDE** team will conduct a meeting to discuss the **ER**, and you may request an **independent educational evaluation (IEE)** at school district expense if you disagree with the evaluation report.

Your school district will invite you to attend an **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** team meeting to determine if your child is in need of either **SDI** or accommodations in order to make meaningful educational progress. The parents are **always** members of the **IEP** team.

The IEP team will write an **IEP** if your child requires **SDI** to make meaningful educational progress.

The team will write a **Section 504 Accommodation Plan**, also known as a **Chapter 15 Service Agreement**, if the **IEP** team determines that your child does not require **SDI** but would benefit from accommodations based on the child's disability.

The **IEP** consists of the following components: a statement of the child's current educational performance, a list of the child's strengths and needs, annual measurable goals, and short-term benchmarks and objectives toward the annual goals, a listing of all **SDI** needed by the student to meet the annual goals, a list of needed related services, such as **occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech and language therapy and psychological counseling or psychiatric counseling.**

The **IEP** team must also consider whether your child requires an **extended school year (ESY)** to achieve his or her **IEP** goals, or if your child is at risk of regressing in his or her academic skills during the summer.

Your school district will issue a **Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP)** at the conclusion of the **IEP** meeting advising you of the district's proposed educational program and placement.

The school district is required to implement your child's **IEP** or Accommodation Plan in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)** appropriate for your child to meet his or her **IEP** goals. Only the **IEP** team can recommend a placement, and any change of placement to a more restrictive environment requires a new **MDE**.

There are 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 mental retardation 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.

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I wish to support the Arc by:

Becoming a member (check one)

_____ Individual \$20.00

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The Arc of Delaware County is a 501© 3 organization. Your contribution is an investment in the lives of persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. Contributions may also be made through the United Way Donor Option Program.

The donor choice numbers are:

United Way of Southeastern PA — #00348

United Way of Southeast DELCO — #N087

Complete this form and mail to:

The Arc of Delaware County

740 S. Chester Rd, Suite G

Swarthmore, PA 19081