



Resources for Special Education Assistance

There are two **Parent Training & Information Centers** in Illinois. These PTICs can:

- Assist parents of children with disabilities to be informed participants in the special education process.
- Assist students with disabilities to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Supply information to teachers and other professionals who provide special education and related services to children with disabilities.

1) Family Resource Center on Disabilities (FRCD) is the Parent Training & Information Center for the Chicago and collar county area. You can find more about their work and their contact information at www.frcd.org. For Spanish: <https://frcd.org/category/recursos-en-espanol/>

2) Family Matters Parent Training & Information Center (FMPTIC) is the resource available for all other Illinois counties. You can learn more about FMPTIC at www.fmptic.org.

Equip for Equality is the Protection and Advocacy Agency for people with disabilities in Illinois. They provide help with special education rights and responsibilities through the information available on their website, trainings, and a Special Education Help Line. You will find their website at <https://www.equipforequality.org/issues/special-education/>

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has a **Facilitated IEP Program** that is free and available to families. You can learn more about this service at <https://www.isbe.net/pages/iep-facilitation-system.aspx>

The **Parent Rights Handbook** from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is a must-have resource for families of children receiving special education services. Available at the following link in both English and Spanish.

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Parents-of-Students-with-Disabilities.aspx>

Susy Woods is an Educational Advocate who works for the Illinois Assistive Technology Program. You can reach Susy by email at swoods@iltech.org or via phone at 217.638.8411.

Council of Parent Attorneys & Advocates (COPAA) is a national organization with a Directory of Parent Attorneys/Advocates that includes Illinois. Look for the Directory tab at the top of the Home Page on their website at <https://www.copaa.org/>

Local **Centers for Independent Living (CILs)** sometimes have special education or IEP support available but this differs from CIL to CIL. You can find the CIL that serves your area at www.incil.org.

The Arc@School – Through The Arc@School, The Arc provides training, and resources to help families and other stakeholders navigate the special education system. <https://thearcatschool.org> In Spanish at <https://thearcatschool.org/en-espanol/>

Loyola University Law School provides **Stand Up For Each Other (SUFEO) Chicago** - a student-run organization that provides **free** information and services for K-12 students facing suspension, bullying, or exclusion from school. SUFEO law students operate a **helpline**, supervised by attorneys in the *Civitas* Child Law Clinic. After a brief intake, SUFEO can provide information, referrals, advice, and, in some cases, representation for K-12 students in school-based meetings, on issues such as:

- Suspension appeals
- Bullying complaints and investigations
- Safety planning meetings
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings
- Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDRs)
- Records appeals

Contact: 773-800-0338 (phone) sufeo-chicago@luc.edu (email)

Finally, it is very important to thoughtfully consider your advocacy choices. See the following for advice on **How to Choose a Lay Advocate in Special Education**. [Guidelines for Choosing a Lay Advocate in Special Education](https://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/guidelines-for-choosing-a-lay-advocate-in-special-education) ([illinoisattorneygeneral.gov](https://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov))