

Nine Important Takeaways from Educational Advocacy, Advocate University

- Every youth has a **right to a free and appropriate education**. To achieve this goal, a child whose needs cannot be met in general education may receive special education services (an individualized education program, IEP)
- To qualify for an IEP, a youth must have one or more of **13 qualifying disabilities** described by the educational code, which affects the youth's ability to learn.
- If a youth's disability does not affect their ability to learn, a **student success team meeting or a 504 plan** can be put into place to make sure your youth is receiving the free and appropriate education to which they are entitled.
- You do **not** need to hold educational rights to obtain information from the school. Your Court order specifically states that you have access to school records.
- You can obtain **up-to-date information** about your youth's attendance, behavior, and grades from the office. You may also join the school parent portal for daily updates. Your supervisor will guide you!
- Please advocate for more than simply academics, including **extracurricular activities, social activities, behavior, and attendance**.
- There are only three additional capabilities that you have if you hold **educational rights**.
1 -- Consent to an IEP assessment 2 -- Sign agreeing to the final IEP 3 -- Make the final school placement decision (including input from the youth's entire team)
- Several laws pertain to a foster youth's education, including allowing the youth to remain in their school of origin after a placement change, continuing in CIF sports after a placement change without a wait, and graduating with a high school diploma with fewer credits. Check with your supervisor for details and qualifications.
- Please add as much **information** about your youth's education as possible to your Court report. Let the judge know what the youth's favorite and least favorite classes are, comments the youth has made about school and the friends they have at school, comments the teachers have made, awards the youth may have won, behavior interventions that have been put into place, meetings that have been held, what the youth likes to do during lunch break.