

Special Education resources for Virginia families

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) and Parent Resource Centers: PEATC is Virginia's parent training and information center with primary funding from the US Department of Education. Call PEATC at 1-800-869-6782 or (703) 923-0010 to get more information. PEATC's Richmond office can be reached at 1-800-475-7918 or (804) 819-1999. They offer easy-to-understand, research-based disability information, education, advocacy, training and support for families of children with disabilities and professionals. They also assist local Parent Resource Centers (which are in most VA school districts and provide information, assistance, referrals and workshops for parents and educators). **En Español**, llamar al 1-800-869-6782. PEATC can help find the Parent Resource Center near you.

Virginia Department of Education is the state agency that oversees Special Education. Tel. (804) 225-2932 or tel. 1-800-422-2083. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is the agency that monitors problems with special education, including complaints from families/providers, Due Process filings, and a mediation program. The VDOE Ombudsman provides information for families. VDOE publishes several items helpful to families, including: "A Parent's Guide to Special Education," Technical Assistance documents including Extended School Year Services and Discipline (including Behavioral Intervention Plans). The Department of Education's website: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us> has extensive information about special education, transition, etc. and a special site was developed in 2013 for families: <http://vafamilysped.org/>.

Legal Services: Many offices now have staff specifically working on child advocacy issues, such as special education. Legal Services offices generally serve people who are low-income. JustChildren is a program of the Legal Aid Justice Center, and provides assistance state-wide in areas of policy improvement and capacity-building for community groups and Legal Services offices. JustChildren also produces a handbook called "*Helping You Help Your Child: Focus on Education*" (\$15 suggested donation, free for low-income people). It includes chapters about special education, school discipline, rights of homeless and immigrant youth. It's available on the Legal Aid Justice Center's website: www.justice4all.org.

Wrightslaw: Pete and Pam Wright publish a free online newsletter, *The Special Ed Advocate*, about special education legal and advocacy issues, cases, tactics and strategy, and Internet resources. Subscribers receive announcements and alerts about new cases, events, and special offers on books. To subscribe, go to <http://www.wrightslaw.com/subscribe.htm>. To contact Wrightslaw by mail: Pete and Pam Wright, Wrightslaw & The Special Ed Advocate, P. O. Box 1008, Deltaville, VA 23043. Pete provides legal representation and Wrightslaw also publishes books including topics such as special education, advocacy skills, and No Child Left Behind.

Transition sites:

- I'm Determined, a self-advocacy project in VA, website: <http://www.imdetermined.org/>
- Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Transition Innovations was launched in 2013 and seeks to be a centralized source for information about transition for students with disabilities <http://www.centerontransition.org/index.html>
- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability <http://www.ncwd-youth/> (includes a resource about disclosure: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure> and much more)
- Handbook: Building Bridges to the Future: www.clearbrook.org/document.doc?id=60 (Published by an organization in Illinois, but good overviews and food for thought)
- VA Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services <http://www.vadrs.org/services.htm>
- National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) <http://nstattac.org/>.