



Requesting Your Child's Educational Record

A Parent's Guide to FERPA Record Requests

A step-by-step guide to requesting, understanding and organizing your child's educational records.

Whether you're preparing for an IEP meeting, reviewing your child's educational history, or simply organizing your records, this guide will help you request and review your child's educational record with confidence. Every child in public education has a cumulative education record - whether or not they receive special education. Ideally, your records should mirror the district's educational record. If the district has documents you've never seen, requesting your child's complete educational record can help identify those gaps.

What is FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that gives parents the right to inspect and review their child's educational records maintained by a public school.

Obtaining a complete copy of your child's educational record can help you:

- ☐ Prepare for an upcoming IEP meeting
- ☐ Better understand your child's educational history
- ☐ Review evaluations and progress data
- ☐ Organize important records
- ☐ Work effectively with an advocate, evaluator, or attorney

While FERPA guarantees your right to “review” your child’s documents, it does not require them to provide copies. FERPA generally allows schools to charge a reasonable fee for copies, but not for searching for or retrieving records. Many districts now provide records electronically through a secure records portal or document delivery service. These services will typically email you copies of the file.

If your district does not choose to provide you with copies and instead asks you to come to the office to review, take your phone, tablet or similar device to take photos of the records. This will provide you with your own digital record and save you the time and inconvenience of sitting at a copy machine.

Under FERPA, schools have 45 calendar days to fulfill your request.



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Step 1

Find Out How Your District Handles Record Requests

Every district has its own process. Start by visiting your district's website. Search for pages related to: *student records, educational records, records office, registrar or record request.*

If you cannot locate the process online, call the district office and ask:

"How do I make a request for my child's cumulative educational records under FERPA?"

Step 2

Make Your Request in Writing

Be specific. Rather than simply asking for your child's complete educational record, ask for: their full educational record. Including but not limited to all:

- Consent forms
- Assessment Plans
- Evaluations
- Eligibility reports
- IEPs
- Prior Written Notices
- Progress Reports
- Report Cards
- Service Logs
- State & District Testing Results
- Work Samples
- Behavior & Discipline Records
- Attendance Records
- Any documents in the file containing personally identifiable information



Advocate Tip

You have the right to review any record that personally identifies your child, that the district maintains, including videos and photos. If the district expresses concern about the privacy of other students in videos or photos, ask that they redact/obscure those images in a way that maintains privacy, but preserves your right to review.

If this is your first time requesting your child's records, specify that you would like all records from the date your child enrolled in the district through current.

After your initial request, I recommend families make a record request at the end of each school year. In your annual requests, you may specify that you are requesting records from the date of your last request to current.

If you are looking for documents related to a specific event/incident be sure to include the dates of the event and any other information that would help the records department locate exactly what you need.



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Sample Written Record Request

Date

Re: Request for the complete educational record for, Student Name, Student ID#

Dear (Records Office, Special Education Department, or Contact Name),

I am requesting a copy of my child's complete educational record under FERPA.

Please include all educational records related to my child, regardless of where they are maintained or stored. This includes, but is not limited to all consent forms, assessment plans, evaluations, eligibility reports, IEPs, prior written notices, progress reports, report cards, service logs, state and district testing results, work samples, behavior and discipline records, attendance records and any documents in the file containing personally identifiable information.

If records are maintained in more than one location or system, please include records from all locations.

If possible, I would appreciate receiving the records electronically. If there are any records that cannot be provided, please let me know which records are unavailable and why.

Thank you for your assistance. Please let me know if you need any additional information to process my request.

Sincerely,

Parent/Guardian Name

Email

Phone



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Step 3

Review What You Receive

Once you receive the records, don't immediately put them in a binder. Instead:

- ☐ Confirm records span every school year
- ☐ Look for missing evaluations
- ☐ Verify you have all IEPs, progress reports and prior written notices.
- ☐ Check for service logs for any related services your child receives.
- ☐ Identify any documents that you believe should be in the record, but are missing.

Step 4

Merge Them With Your Other Records

- ☐ Add them to any existing records you have and eliminate any duplicates.
- ☐ Add current and relevant documents to your physical binder.
- ☐ Rename each file so it is easy to identify before adding it to your digital filing system.

Advocate Tip

If your child has attended any other schools or districts outside of your current district, make this same comprehensive record request of those as well. This ensures you have all possible records.

Every document tells a piece of your child's story – collectively they tell the full story.

Make sure there are no gaps in that story.