

External Support Resource Directory for Parent Advocates

Important Notice: This resource directory is current as of June 2025. Contact information, websites, and services may change over time. Always verify accuracy of information before relying on these resources. Check organization websites directly for the most current contact details, services, and eligibility requirements.

National Advocacy Organizations

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)

- **Website:** www.copaa.org
- **Phone:** (844) 426-7224
- **Services:** Attorney referrals, advocacy training, legal resources
- **Key Resources:**
 - Attorney directory by state
 - Parent advocacy training materials
 - Legal updates and case law summaries
 - Annual conference and webinars
- **Cost:** Membership fees; some free resources

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

- **Website:** www.ndrn.org
- **Phone:** (202) 408-9514
- **Services:** Legal advocacy, policy advocacy, disability rights protection
- **Key Resources:**
 - State-by-state Protection & Advocacy agency directory
 - Legal resources and fact sheets
 - Policy updates and advocacy alerts
 - Training materials for advocates
- **Cost:** Free resources; funded by federal grants

PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights)

- **Website:** www.pacer.org
- **Phone:** (952) 838-9000
- **Toll-Free:** (800) 537-2237
- **Services:** Parent training, advocacy support, resources
- **Key Resources:**
 - Simon Technology Center for assistive technology
 - Bullying prevention resources
 - Transition planning materials
 - Spanish-language resources
- **Cost:** Free resources and training

Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) National Network

- **Website:** www.parentcenternetwork.org
- **Services:** State-specific parent training centers
- **Key Resources:**
 - State PTI directory
 - Training materials and workshops
 - Individual family support
 - Community resource connections
- **Cost:** Free services funded by federal grants

Center for Parent Information and Resources

- **Website:** www.parentcenterhub.org
 - **Phone:** (973) 642-8100
 - **Services:** Information hub for parents and families
 - **Key Resources:**
 - Comprehensive disability information
 - State resource directories
 - Fact sheets in multiple languages
 - Training materials and webinars
 - **Cost:** Free resources
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Federal Government Resources

U.S. Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

- **Website:** www.ed.gov/ocr
- **Phone:** (800) 421-3481
- **Services:** Civil rights complaint investigation, guidance
- **Key Resources:**
 - Section 504 and ADA guidance
 - Complaint filing procedures
 - Resolution letters and findings
 - Policy guidance documents
- **How to Use:** File discrimination complaints, get guidance on rights

U.S. Department of Education - Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

- **Website:** www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep
- **Services:** IDEA oversight, policy guidance, funding
- **Key Resources:**
 - IDEA regulations and guidance
 - State performance data
 - Research and evaluation reports
 - Technical assistance resources
- **How to Use:** Understand federal requirements, access research

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

- **Website:** www.nimh.nih.gov
- **Phone:** (866) 615-6464
- **Services:** Mental health research and information
- **Key Resources:**
 - Mental health condition information
 - Treatment resources
 - Research findings
 - Educational materials
- **How to Use:** Understand mental health conditions, find treatment options

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Disability and Health

- **Website:** www.cdc.gov/disability
 - **Services:** Disability statistics, health information
 - **Key Resources:**
 - Disability prevalence data
 - Health promotion materials
 - Learn the Signs, Act Early program
 - Developmental milestone information
 - **How to Use:** Understand disability statistics, developmental information
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Legal Support and Attorney Resources

Disability Rights Legal Advocates

- **Website:** www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org
- **Services:** Legal representation, advocacy training
- **Specialties:** Education law, disability rights litigation
- **Geographic Focus:** Varies by organization

Education Law Association

- **Website:** www.educationlaw.org
- **Services:** Attorney directory, legal resources
- **Key Resources:**
 - Attorney referral service
 - Legal publications
 - Conference proceedings
 - Professional development
- **Cost:** Membership fees for full access

American Bar Association - Special Education Law

- **Website:** www.americanbar.org
- **Services:** Attorney resources, continuing education
- **Key Resources:**
 - Attorney directory
 - Legal publications
 - Ethics guidance
 - Professional development
- **How to Use:** Find qualified attorneys, access legal resources

Legal Aid Organizations (Local)

- **How to Find:** Search "legal aid [your city/state]"
- **Services:** Low-cost or free legal representation
- **Eligibility:** Usually income-based
- **Specialties:** May have education law specialists

Law School Clinics

- **How to Find:** Contact local law schools
 - **Services:** Student-supervised legal representation
 - **Cost:** Often free or low-cost
 - **Benefits:** Supervised by experienced attorneys
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Parent Training and Information Centers

Finding Your State PTI

- **National Directory:** www.parentcenternetwork.org/find-your-center
- **Search Method:** Enter your state or zip code
- **Services Provided:** Training, information, support, advocacy

Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRC)

- **Purpose:** Serve underrepresented populations
- **Focus Areas:** Cultural and linguistic minorities, low-income families
- **Services:** Culturally appropriate training and support

Regional PTI Services

Typical Services Include:

- Individual consultation and support
- Group training workshops
- Information and referral services
- Advocacy training
- Conflict resolution support
- Transition planning assistance
- Rights and advocacy education

Online PTI Resources

- **Webinar libraries**
 - **Downloadable fact sheets**
 - **Video training modules**
 - **Interactive workshops**
 - **Resource databases**
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Disability-Specific Organizations

Autism Organizations

Autism Society of America

- **Website:** www.autism-society.org
- **Phone:** (800) 3-AUTISM
- **Services:** Information, advocacy, local chapter support
- **Resources:** Educational materials, transition planning, family support

Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)

- **Website:** autisticadvocacy.org
- **Services:** Self-advocacy training, policy advocacy
- **Perspective:** Autistic-led organization

Learning Disabilities Organizations

Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)

- **Website:** ldaamerica.org
- **Phone:** (412) 341-1515
- **Services:** Information, advocacy, local affiliates
- **Resources:** Educational resources, conference proceedings

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

- **Website:** www.nclld.org
- **Services:** Research, advocacy, public awareness
- **Resources:** Educational guides, policy updates

Intellectual Disabilities Organizations

The Arc

- **Website:** thearc.org
- **Phone:** (800) 433-5255
- **Services:** Advocacy, services, local chapters
- **Resources:** Self-advocacy training, transition planning

National Down Syndrome Society

- **Website:** www.ndss.org
- **Phone:** (800) 221-4602
- **Services:** Information, advocacy, support
- **Resources:** Educational materials, medical guidance

Physical Disabilities Organizations

United Spinal Association

- **Website:** www.unitedspinal.org
- **Phone:** (800) 404-2898
- **Services:** Advocacy, information, support
- **Resources:** Accessibility guides, equipment information

Paralyzed Veterans of America

- **Website:** www.pva.org
- **Services:** Advocacy, support, equipment
- **Resources:** Accessibility information, benefits guidance

Sensory Disabilities Organizations

National Federation of the Blind

- **Website:** nfb.org
- **Phone:** (410) 659-9314
- **Services:** Advocacy, training, support
- **Resources:** Braille materials, technology training

National Association of the Deaf

- **Website:** www.nad.org
- **Services:** Advocacy, information, interpreting services
- **Resources:** ASL resources, deaf culture information

Mental Health Organizations

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

- **Website:** www.nami.org
- **Phone:** (800) 950-NAMI
- **Services:** Support groups, education, advocacy
- **Resources:** Family education programs, crisis resources

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)

- **Website:** chadd.org
 - **Phone:** (301) 306-7070
 - **Services:** Information, advocacy, support groups
 - **Resources:** Educational materials, treatment information
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Educational and Research Resources

National Research Centers

National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO)

- **Website:** nceo.info
- **University:** University of Minnesota
- **Focus:** Assessment and accountability
- **Resources:** Research reports, policy guidance

IRIS Center

- **Website:** iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu
- **University:** Vanderbilt University
- **Focus:** Teacher training resources
- **Resources:** Online modules, case studies

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

- **Website:** www.pbis.org
- **Focus:** Behavior support systems
- **Resources:** Implementation guides, training materials

University-Based Centers

- **Beach Center on Disability:** www.beachcenter.org (University of Kansas)
- **Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute:** fpg.unc.edu (UNC)
- **Human Development Institute:** www.hdi.uky.edu (University of Kentucky)

Research Organizations

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

- **Website:** www.cec.sped.org
- **Services:** Professional development, research
- **Resources:** Research journals, best practices

American Educational Research Association (AERA)

- **Website:** www.aera.net
 - **Services:** Research dissemination, professional development
 - **Resources:** Research journals, conference proceedings
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Online Communities and Support Networks

Facebook Groups

Search Terms: "[Disability] + parents", "IEP support", "Special education advocacy"

Popular Groups:

- "IEP/504 Plan Support Group"
- "The Mighty Community"
- "Special Needs Parents Support Network"
- "Autism Support for Parents"
- "ADHD Parents Together"

Best Practices:

- Read group rules before posting
- Verify advice with official sources
- Protect your child's privacy
- Be cautious about personal information

Reddit Communities

- **r/specialed**: Special education discussions
- **r/IEPs**: IEP-specific support
- **r/disability**: General disability discussions
- **r/autism**: Autism community
- **r/ADHD**: ADHD support and information

Online Forums

SpecialNeedsAnswers.com

- **Focus**: Special education advocacy
- **Features**: Expert advice, parent discussions
- **Cost**: Free with registration

WrongPlanet.net

- **Focus**: Autism spectrum community
- **Features**: Forums, articles, resources
- **Cost**: Free access

ADDitude Magazine Community

- **Website**: www.additudemag.com
- **Focus**: ADHD and learning disabilities
- **Features**: Expert webinars, parent forums

Professional Networks

LinkedIn Groups

- "Special Education Professionals"
- "Disability Advocacy Network"
- "IEP and 504 Plan Specialists"

YouTube Channels

- **Spencer's World**: Autism advocacy and education
 - **Special Education Resource**: IEP guidance
 - **Autism Family**: Family perspectives and advocacy
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Technology and Assistive Technology Resources

National Assistive Technology Centers

Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)

- **Website:** www.atia.org
- **Services:** Information, training, vendor directory
- **Resources:** AT guides, funding information

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

- **Website:** www.nidcd.nih.gov
- **Services:** Research, information on communication disorders
- **Resources:** AT for communication, hearing aids information

State Assistive Technology Programs

- **Website:** www.at3center.net/stateprogram
- **Services:** AT evaluations, equipment loans, training
- **Funding:** May provide low-interest loans or grants

Technology Resources

Understood.org

- **Website:** www.understood.org
- **Services:** Learning and attention issues support
- **Resources:** AT guides, app recommendations

ClosingTheGap.com

- **Website:** www.closingthegap.com
- **Services:** AT information and training
- **Resources:** Product reviews, conference proceedings

National Center for Technology Innovation (NCTI)

- **Website:** www.nationaltechcenter.org
- **Services:** Research and development
- **Resources:** Technology briefs, research reports

Free and Low-Cost Technology Resources

Learning Ally

- **Website:** learningally.org
- **Services:** Audiobook library for students with reading disabilities
- **Eligibility:** Documented reading disability

Bookshare

- **Website:** www.bookshare.org
- **Services:** Accessible digital library
- **Eligibility:** Print disability documentation required

Voice Dream Reader

- **Platform:** Mobile app
 - **Services:** Text-to-speech reading app
 - **Cost:** One-time purchase
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How to Find State and Local Resources

State Department of Education Resources

Finding Your State DOE

- **Search Method:** "[State name] Department of Education special education"
- **Key Sections to Look For:**
 - Special Education Division
 - Dispute Resolution Office
 - Parent Information Center
 - Assistive Technology Program

State DOE Typical Resources:

- State special education regulations
- Complaint procedures
- Due process information
- Parent rights documents
- Professional development opportunities

State Protection and Advocacy Agencies

Finding Your P&A Agency

- **National Directory:** www.ndrn.org/about/ndrn-member-agencies
- **Services:** Legal advocacy, rights protection
- **Eligibility:** Varies by agency
- **Cost:** Usually free

State Disability Councils

Finding Your State Council

- **Search Method:** "[State name] Developmental Disabilities Council"
- **Services:** Advocacy, systems change, grants
- **Resources:** State disability plan, funding opportunities

University Disability Services

University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)

- **National Directory:** www.aucd.org/directory/directory.cfm
- **Services:** Training, research, service
- **Resources:** Professional development, community education

Local Resources Discovery Methods

211 Information and Referral

- **Phone:** Dial 2-1-1
- **Website:** www.211.org
- **Services:** Comprehensive local resource database
- **Categories:** Disability services, education, family support

Local Disability Organizations

Search Methods:

- "[City/County] disability services"
- "[City/County] special needs support"
- "Disability advocacy [your area]"

Hospital and Medical Center Resources

- Children's hospitals often have:
 - Social work departments
 - Family resource centers
 - Support groups
 - Educational advocacy services

Faith-Based Organizations

- Many offer:
 - Support groups
 - Respite care
 - Educational advocacy
 - Family support services

Professional Service Providers

Finding Educational Advocates

Search Methods:

- "Educational advocate [your area]"
- "IEP advocate [city/state]"
- Contact local PTI for referrals
- Ask other parents for recommendations

Finding Special Education Attorneys

Resources:

- State bar association directories
- COPAA attorney directory
- Martindale-Hubbell lawyer directory
- Local legal aid organizations

Independent Educational Evaluators

Finding Qualified Evaluators:

- Request list from school district
 - Contact university psychology departments
 - Ask other parents for referrals
 - Check professional association directories
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Emergency and Crisis Resources

National Crisis Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- **Phone:** 988
- **Website:** suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- **Services:** 24/7 crisis support
- **Special Services:** Deaf/hard of hearing access

Crisis Text Line

- **Text:** Text HOME to 741741
- **Website:** www.crisistextline.org
- **Services:** 24/7 text-based crisis support

National Child Abuse Hotline

- **Phone:** (800) 4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)
- **Website:** www.childhelp.org
- **Services:** Crisis intervention, reporting

Educational Crisis Resources

When Schools Violate Rights

- Contact state Protection & Advocacy agency
- File emergency state complaint
- Contact Office for Civil Rights
- Seek immediate legal consultation
- Document everything thoroughly

School Safety Concerns

- Report to school administration immediately
- Contact local law enforcement if necessary
- File incident reports
- Request emergency IEP meeting
- Consider temporary placement change

Mental Health Crisis Resources

NAMI Crisis Resources

- **Website:** www.nami.org/help
- **Services:** Crisis intervention, local resources
- **Features:** Searchable database of local services

SAMHSA National Helpline

- **Phone:** (800) 662-4357
 - **Website:** www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline
 - **Services:** Treatment referral and information
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Training and Professional Development

Parent Training Opportunities

Wrightslaw Training

- **Website:** www.wrightslaw.com
- **Services:** Legal advocacy training
- **Formats:** In-person and online training
- **Focus:** Special education law and advocacy

COPAA Advocacy Training

- **Website:** www.copaa.org
- **Services:** Parent advocate certification
- **Benefits:** Professional development, networking

Matrix Parent Network

- **Website:** www.matrixparents.org
- **Services:** Parent leadership training
- **Focus:** Systems change and advocacy

Professional Advocate Training

Educational Advocacy Certification Programs

- Various organizations offer certification
- Requirements vary by program
- Include legal training, practical experience
- Often require continuing education

Mediation and Conflict Resolution Training

- Available through universities
- Professional organizations offer training
- Can be valuable for advocacy work

Online Learning Platforms

Coursera/edX Special Education Courses

- University-level courses
- Professional development certificates
- Flexible scheduling
- Varying costs

Professional Association Webinars

- Often free for members
 - Continuing education credits
 - Expert presentations
 - Recorded sessions available
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Resource Evaluation and Verification

Evaluating Online Resources

Quality Indicators:

- **Author credentials:** Check qualifications and expertise
- **Publication date:** Ensure information is current
- **Source citations:** Look for references to research
- **Organization reputation:** Verify credibility
- **Bias assessment:** Consider perspective and agenda

Red Flags:

- Promises of "cures" or unrealistic outcomes
- Requests for significant upfront payments
- Lack of professional credentials
- Testimonials without supporting evidence
- High-pressure sales tactics

Verifying Professional Credentials**Attorneys:**

- State bar association websites
- Disciplinary records check
- Experience in special education law
- Client references

Educational Advocates:

- Training and certification verification
- References from other families
- Experience with similar cases
- Professional association membership

Healthcare Providers:

- State licensing board verification
- Board certification status
- Hospital affiliations
- Malpractice history check

Getting Referrals**Best Sources:**

- Other parents with similar experiences
- PTI centers
- Disability organizations
- Healthcare providers
- School personnel (sometimes)

Questions to Ask:

- What specific services did they provide?
- How was their communication style?
- What were the outcomes?

- Would you use them again?
 - Any concerns or drawbacks?
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Creating Your Personal Resource Network

Building Your Resource Library

Essential Resources to Collect:

- State PTI contact information
- Local disability organizations
- Emergency crisis numbers
- Educational advocate contacts
- Attorney references
- Medical provider information

Organization System:

- Contact database with notes
- Physical and digital filing system
- Regular updates and verification
- Easy access during emergencies

Networking Strategies

Connect with Other Parents:

- Join local parent groups
- Attend disability organization events
- Participate in IEP meetings as observer
- Use social media groups appropriately

Build Professional Relationships:

- Maintain positive school relationships
- Develop healthcare provider network
- Connect with service providers
- Join professional organizations

Maintaining Your Network

Regular Activities:

- Update contact information annually
- Share resources with other parents
- Attend training and conferences
- Participate in advocacy activities
- Provide feedback to organizations

Giving Back:

- Mentor newer parents
- Share successful strategies
- Volunteer with organizations
- Provide testimonials for helpful resources
- Advocate for systems improvement

Remember: Building a strong resource network takes time, but it's one of the most valuable investments you can make in your advocacy journey. Start with one or two key resources and gradually expand your network as you learn about additional needs and opportunities.