

What to Know/Who to Call



The key to becoming an effective partner in your child's education is to understand not only the process, but to know *who* to call when you need answers. As parents raising children with a disability label, we have to learn about so many things once our children receive a diagnosis. We have to know about:

- the nature of the disability,
- the resources available, and
- how to work through complex medical, social service and school systems.

This can all be overwhelming at times. The intention of this website is to assist you in finding the right answers and to give you guidance on whom to call when you are stuck, don't understand or just need a little validation.

It is important to note that ***all*** students are members of school communities. Students receiving special education supports and services will typically be involved in both general education and special education. Parents need to understand that "who to call" is not always special education personnel.

Let's get started on getting you to the right place! So, who are you going to call?

Note that since Texas is a state of "**local control**," parents have to ask who the right person described in this website is within their individual school districts. For example, the point of contact in some school districts may be the **Diagnostician**. In other districts, it may be a **Case Manager**. In others, it will be the **classroom teacher**. Communication is key to finding the right person with the right answers. At your [ARD/IEP meeting](#), ask who your primary contact will be.

When you have general questions about your child's education, you can contact the following people at your child's school or school district *or* you can access the many parent resources that are available. It is always best to start with the person who works closest to your child and then work up the chain of command. The following list will get you started.

- The **Teacher** has information about your child's current progress, class routines, behavior issues, and individualized education program (IEP) implementation.
- The **Principal** has information about school policies and procedures, school records, schedules, IEP implementation, admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee issues, and discipline procedures.
- The **Special Education Administrator/Director** has information about district special education procedures and policies, can provide an explanation of [procedural safeguards](#) (rights and responsibilities), can provide clarification on

concerns about implementation of the IEP, and can handle the request for an independent educational evaluation.

Technical Assistance

The following Technical Assistance Resources will provide you with information and refer you to other sources that may more effectively answer your questions or concerns.

- [Special Education Information Center](#)
Parents can call the Special Education Information Center toll-free at 1-855-SPEDTEX (1-855-773-3839) for answers to their special education questions. SPEDTex hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 pm.
- [Education Service Centers](#)
Texas is divided by the Texas Education Agency into twenty regions. Each region contains an Education Service Center (ESC). While each ESC offers a variety of services that support public education, each one provides leadership, training, and technical assistance in the area of special education for students with disabilities. ESCs support the Texas Education Agency's focus on increasing student achievement. Each ESC serves as first point of contact for school districts, parents, and other community stakeholders, and provides for the joint training of parents and special education, related services, and general education personnel.
- [Parent Training & Information \(PTI\) Projects](#)
PTI projects are funded by the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, DC. Their charge is to educate parents on the special education process. Partners Resource Network (PRN) is the non-profit agency that is funded to administer the three PTI Projects which cover the state of Texas. These projects operate independently, but do share some central administrative functions. All of the projects share the common purpose of empowering parents of children and youth with disabilities in their roles as parents, decision makers, and advocates for their children. You can contact them at 1-800-866-4726.
- [Disability Rights Texas](#)
This agency is the protection and advocacy organization for Texas. They have specific priorities around education that they will provide free assistance (primarily inclusion, discipline, and transition). To access their legal services – Complete an online [intake form](#) or call 1-800-252-9108
- [Local Parent Organizations](#) can give you information and training about the way the special education process works. They are also excellent resources for providing opportunities to network with and gain information from other families and for support.
- [Texas Project FIRST contact](#)
Feel free to ask questions through the website. Often we will refer you back to the part of the website where you can find the information. The staff of Texas

Project FIRST does NOT provide legal advice or respond for the Texas Education Agency.

Other Educational Resources:

By using the resources that are available – You can learn more about the special education process.

- Guide to the ARD/IEP Process, Procedural Safeguards, and Legal Framework <http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/LandingPage.aspx?DT=G&LID=en>
- [IDEA Manual](#) – by [The Arc of Texas](#) & [Disability Rights Texas](#)
- [Community Coordination Resource Groups](#) – Interagency groups that come together to create plans for individuals whose needs cannot be met by one group alone.
- [Navigate Life Texas](#) – Resources for kids with disabilities and special health care needs.
- [Parent Companion: First Five Years](#) – Information, inspiration and resources for Texas parents of children with disabilities, birth to 5 years of age

Also see [Disability Resources](#) for more resources.