



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

BRIAN J. WHISTON  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

August 31, 2017

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child will soon start receiving special education services. While this may seem overwhelming at times, I want to assure you that we, along with your school and other educators across the state, are working hard to help your child receive the best possible education.

As Director of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), I am happy to share additional resources available to support families. Family Matters resources are available to help you understand many of the confusing parts of special education and to connect you to other parent resources.

The Family Matters web page includes a series of fact sheets. Each fact sheet explains a different special education topic and provides additional resources for your consideration. The web page also includes a list of other helpful programs and state agencies. New fact sheets and resources will be added on an ongoing basis, so check the web page regularly to see what's new.

The main support for special education services for your child is provided by your local school district. However, our goal is that the Family Matters information will further support you and your child in understanding the special education process and requirements.

The MDE Office of Special Education would like to stay in touch with you. If you are interested in receiving Family Matters updates, please visit the [Family Matters web page](#) at [www.michigan.gov/specialeducation-familymatters](http://www.michigan.gov/specialeducation-familymatters) to sign up to receive notification when new information is available or contact the [Michigan Alliance for Families](#) for additional information on special education topics at [www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org](http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org).

If you would like to speak with a staff member from the OSE, please call our toll free number at 888-320-8384.

Sincerely,

Teri Chapman, Ed. S.  
Director, Office of Special Education

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# Family Matters

Learn about special education topics. Find resources to help you and your child.

## What is Family Matters?

Family Matters is an outreach effort from the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education (MDE OSE).

Family Matters provides parents with information about special education and other resources.

## Visit our web page

[michigan.gov/specialeducation-familymatters](http://michigan.gov/specialeducation-familymatters)

## What you'll find at

[michigan.gov/specialeducation-familymatters](http://michigan.gov/specialeducation-familymatters)

## Fact Sheets

Our fact sheets explain special education laws and practices. The documents are easy to read and give links to more in-depth resources.

## Updates

Sign up to receive updates that matter to families from the Office of Special Education (OSE).

## Additional Resources

We list other organizations and state agencies that help parents and students receiving special education services.

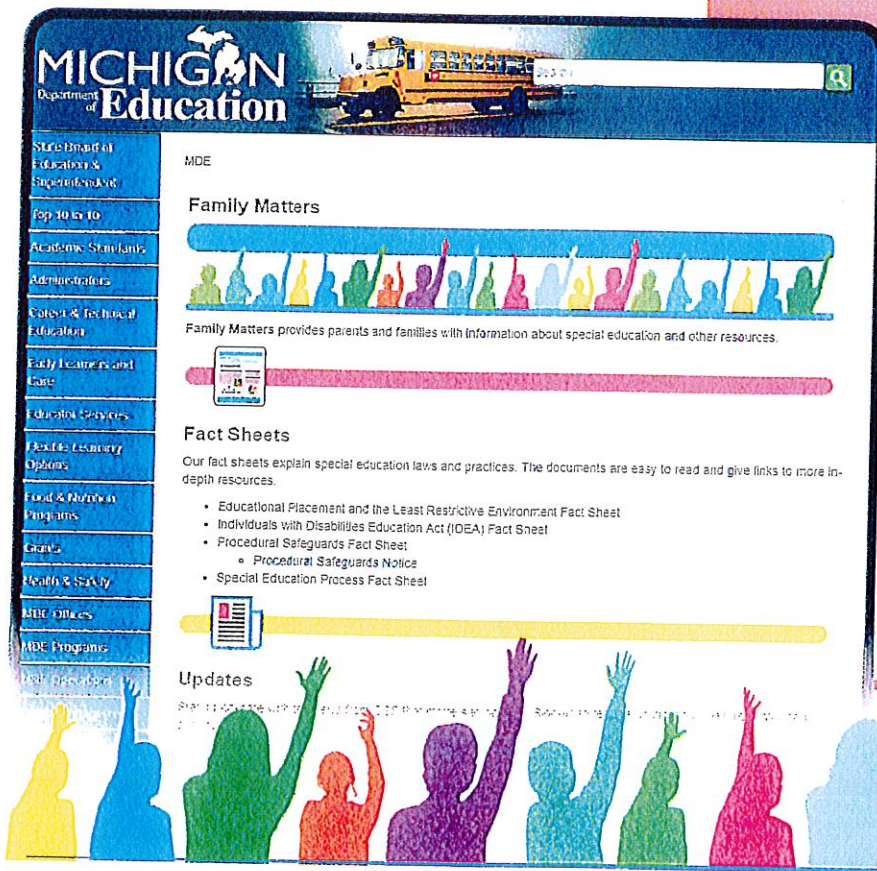
### A Statewide Resource for Families

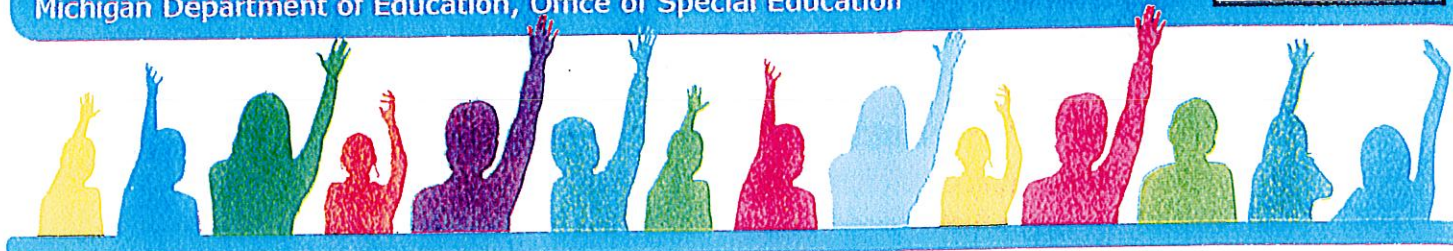
One such resource is the Michigan Alliance for Families. Michigan Alliance connects you with a parent mentor. Parent mentors assist you in navigating the educational system and are knowledgeable about state and local resources.



[www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org](http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org)  
[info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org](mailto:info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org)

1-800-552-4821





## Procedural Safeguards

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) is a federal law for special education. The IDEA includes protections for parents and students. These protections are called the procedural safeguards. Schools must provide a document explaining all of the procedural safeguards to parents.

### How do the Procedural Safeguards protect parents?

The school must keep parents informed.

Schools must provide prior written notice to parents before taking many different actions. [Some of these actions also require parent consent.](#)

Parents have options if they disagree with a school decision.

Parents may request mediation, file a state complaint, or request a due process hearing to resolve a disagreement. Parents may also request an independent educational evaluation (IEE) if they do not agree with the results of a school evaluation.

Personal information is kept confidential.

Only people who need your information and child's records have access to it, unless you provide consent to share the information with others. Public reporting on special education never includes personally identifiable information.

### Procedural Safeguards Notice

If you have questions regarding the Procedural Safeguards, ask your IEP team for additional information.

#### Parents must receive the Procedural Safeguards Notice:

- At least once a year.
- Upon a parent written request for evaluation.
- When a parent files his or her first state complaint and first due process complaint in a school year.
- When a student has a change of placement due to a violation of a student code of conduct.
- When requested by a parent.



## Key Information in the Procedural Safeguards Notice

### Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)

If you disagree with the school's evaluation, you can request an evaluation to be done by a non-school professional. The district may have to pay for the evaluation in some cases.

### Prior Written Notice and Parental Consent

Schools must give you written notice before many different actions, such as changing your child's identification, conducting evaluations, and changing educational placement. The notice must include the reason the school is taking the action or refusing the action.

Some school actions, such as conducting an evaluation, require your consent. You are also able to withdraw consent by doing so in writing.

### Access to Education Records

Only certain individuals have access to your child's educational records. You may review your child's records.

### Resolving Disagreements With the School

You can file a state complaint (investigated by the Michigan Department of Education with involvement by the Intermediate School District) or a due process complaint (resolved by an administrative law judge) if you disagree with a school decision. You may bring civil action if you disagree with the result of a due process hearing. You may also request mediation at no cost to attempt to resolve disputes with the school.

### Child's Educational Placement

Generally, your child's placement is determined by the individualized education program (IEP) team (of which you are a member).

A school may choose to move your child into an interim alternative setting for disciplinary or safety reasons. The decision to move the child is a school decision and must follow certain procedures. However, the alternative setting that is selected is an IEP team decision.

If your child's placement is the cause of a due process complaint, your child's placement will not change until after the proceedings (if at all) in most cases.

### Private Schools

If your school district fails to provide your child with a free appropriate public education, you might be able to enroll your child in a private school at the school district's expense.

If you file a due process complaint, and the hearing officer agrees that the private school placement is appropriate, the district may be required to pay the private school tuition.

## Resources

- [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\): Parental Rights Under IDEA](#)
- [Michigan Department of Education](#)  
Procedural Safeguards Notice
- [Michigan Special Education Mediation Program \(MSEMP\)](#)  
Mediation program for dispute resolution

Michigan Alliance for Families  
information, support, and education

[Michigan Alliance for Families:](#)  
[Procedural Safeguards](#)