



# IEP GUIDE

## JEFFERSON COUNTY, WA

Created for Parents with Neurodivergent Students who attend Jefferson County, Washington School Districts.

Your rights are protected, and you have powerful advocates ready to help navigate special education services when school districts fail to properly implement Individualized Education Programs.

Federal and state laws provide multiple enforcement mechanisms, legal protections for educators who support your child, and professional advocates ready to assist in ensuring appropriate special education services.



**Jefferson County**  
Washington

## Know Your Legal Protections

### Educators Are Protected When They Speak Up

Washington State provides robust whistleblower protection for school employees who report IEP violations. Teachers, therapists, and staff members are legally protected from retaliation when they report failures to implement your child's IEP properly.

#### [RCW 42.41 - Local Government Whistleblower Protection](#)

covers all Washington State school district employees who report improper governmental actions, including IEP non-compliance.

[Federal Section 504 Protections \(29 U.S.C. § 794\)](#) specifically protect educators who advocate for students with disabilities from discrimination and retaliation.

### How to Encourage Educator Reporting

Ask educators directly: "Are you seeing what I am seeing? You are protected by law if you report violations of my child's IEP. Would you help document this for my child's benefit?"

## Document Everything

### Be Tenacious: Request All Records

**Lifechanging Tip:** Use [LetterStream.com](#) or email for all IEP communication - this creates a secure, time-stamped record. **Most Importantly:** Find and use an AI platform connected to upload related documents/correspondences, track patterns, flag inconsistencies, and notes stored in one searchable place.

Submit a one-time written request to receive daily session notes and progress data for the entire school year. Specifically ask for: progress monitoring from each therapy session, daily and weekly behavior charts, work samples showing skill demonstration, teacher notes on accommodations used, and any informal assessments or observations.

## When to Contact OSPI

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction investigates special education violations statewide. [OSPI](#) provides crucial oversight and enforcement when districts fail to comply with special education requirements.

### [OSPI Special Education Division](#)

Phone: [\(360\) 725-6075](#)

Fax: [\(360\) 586-0247](#)

#### **Mailing Address for Complaints:**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Attn: Special Education

P.O. Box 47200

Olympia, WA 98504-7200

### File a Community Complaint When:

IEP services are not delivered as written, accommodations are not implemented consistently, required team members miss IEP meetings, district refuses appropriate evaluations, transition planning is inadequate for students sixteen and older, or you are excluded from IEP decision-making.

**Timeline:** [OSPI](#) investigates within sixty days and can order binding corrective actions.

**Cost:** Free of charge.

**Deadline:** Must file within one year of violation.

### Educational Records Under FERPA

You possess absolute legal rights to your child's complete educational record. Submit written requests specifying complete IEP history and all amendments, all evaluation reports, progress monitoring data and quarterly reports, discipline records and behavioral documentation, and teacher and service provider notes.

**Timeline:** Districts must respond within forty-five days

**Cost:** Reasonable copying fees (typically twenty-five cents per page); however, record review access is free.

## Professional Advocacy Resources

### PAVE (Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment)

Phone: [\(800\) 572-7368](tel:(800)572-7368)

: [www.wapave.org](http://www.wapave.org)

**Services:** Free parent training, one-on-one IEP assistance, online special education training, advocacy workshops.

### OlyCap

Phone: [\(360\) 452-4726](tel:(360)452-4726) ext. 6261

Email: [tildster@olycap.org](mailto:tildster@olycap.org)

Website: [www.olycap.org/early-childhood](http://www.olycap.org/early-childhood)

**Services:** Free preschool, developmental screenings, meals, individualized learning plans, parenting education, home visits, healthcare support, and community resource referrals for families with children age 5 and under.

## Free Legal Assistance

**Northwest Justice Project Special Education Legal Clinic:** [\(206\) 707-7292](tel:(206)707-7292). Statewide CLEAR Hotline [\(206\) 707-7292](tel:(206)707-7292). Services include free IEP and 504 plan review, special education legal consultation for low-income families.

**TeamChild Education Law Collaborative:** Youth Hotline [\(844\) 435-7676](tel:(844)435-7676). For ages 12 through 24, call [\(206\) 322-2444](tel:(206)322-2444). Provides free civil legal advocacy for youth, including special education representation and school discipline matters.

**Disability Rights Washington:** [\(800\) 562-2702](tel:(800)562-2702). Email [info@dr-wa.org](mailto:info@dr-wa.org). Offers legal representation and advocacy for disability rights violations statewide with no income screening required.

## Step-by-Step Action Plan

### Phase One: Immediate Documentation

Start your advocacy file today. Create separate folders for each school year. Request complete educational records through a [formal FERPA request](#). Build relationships with school staff by acknowledging their challenges and expressing appreciation.

### Phase Two: Address Specific Issues

Document IEP implementation failures with dates and duration. Request IEP meeting to address concerns with written request listing specific issues. Follow up in writing within forty-eight hours summarizing all agreements and disagreements.

### Phase Three: Escalate Through Proper Channels

Contact building administration with documented pattern of non-compliance. Engage special education director with comprehensive evidence file. [File OSPI Complaint](#) if necessary with specific legal violations and supporting documentation.

### Phase Four: Professional Advocacy

[Consult with special education attorney](#) if pattern persists despite documentation. Engage educational advocate for ongoing meeting support and complex evaluation interpretations.

## Red Flags Requiring Immediate Action

**Contact OSPI or legal counsel immediately if school refuses to provide required services listed in IEP, child is placed in inappropriate setting without IEP team decision, district retaliates against you for advocacy efforts, required team members are consistently absent from IEP meetings, district refuses to provide Prior Written Notice for decisions, or staff report they have been instructed not to document problems.**

## Your Rights Are Non-Negotiable

Regardless of your school district's compliance history, your child's right to appropriate special education services remains absolute. Federal and state laws provide multiple enforcement mechanisms, legal protections for educators who support your child, and professional advocates ready to assist.

**Remember These Key Points:** You are your child's most important advocate. Documentation serves as your most powerful tool. Professional help is available and often provided free of charge. Legal protections exist at multiple levels. Other families share your concerns and can provide meaningful support.

When districts demonstrate patterns of non-compliance, oversight agencies take violations more seriously. Use this guide to build your case, protect your rights, and ensure your child receives the education they deserve.

## Building Community Support

Special education families are stronger together. Many districts face governance challenges that affect all students, creating opportunities for coalition building. Connect with other families by attending school board meetings, joining or creating parent support networks, and sharing information about legal protections and resources.

### Quick Reference Emergency Contacts

**OSPI Special Education:** [\(360\) 725-6075](tel:(360)725-6075)

**Northwest Justice Project:** [\(888\) 201-1014](tel:(888)201-1014)

**PAVE Parent Support:** [\(800\) 572-7368](tel:(800)572-7368)

**Disability Rights Washington:** [\(800\) 562-2702](tel:(800)562-2702)

**TeamChild (Youth 12-24):** [\(877\) 295-2714](tel:(877)295-2714)

**Your child's future depends on the advocacy you provide today. You have the law, the resources, and the community support to succeed.**