



Advocate & Attorney Resources

Types of Assistance:

Titles are relatively fluid in this profession and do not necessarily indicate the knowledge and effectiveness of the individual. There is currently no accreditation or training oversight. However, parent consultants and advocates that are part of and/or trained through FCSN or SPAN (see below) are more likely to have the appropriate skills. The following title definitions provide a general understanding of typical roles.

Lawyer: Licensed, practicing attorney. Primarily for preparing for hearing and legal action.

Educational Consultant: an education professional with training in one or more areas of mental health, developmental disabilities, and special education. Works with parents to identify the needs of the child and help educate parents on the most appropriate accommodations, services and placement based on the data and assessments. Working knowledge of federal and state special education laws.

Parent Consultant: Typically a parent of a special needs child often has training as an advocate and extensive knowledge from experience. Works with parents to identify the needs of the child and help educate parents on the most appropriate accommodations, services and placement based on the data and assessments. Working knowledge of federal and state special education laws.

Advocate: Primarily to advocate solely for parent wishes. Working knowledge of federal and state special education laws and knows the school system.

Articles:

[Tips for working with a parent consultant & advocate](#)

[Special educational consultant vs advocate](#)

Organizations

Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN): fcsn.org

- ❖ Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) www.fcsn.org/ptic

Special Education Answers and Parent Support

- *Answer questions about IEPs/504s*
- *Connect with sped resources*
- *Advocate Interns (who donate ~25 hours to work on a case with FCSN supervision)*
- *Can request a list of current advocates they recommend and/or advocates taking pro bono cases*

617-236-7210

Special Needs Advocacy Network, Inc (SPAN): <https://spanmass.org>

- ❖ Massachusetts Professional Association for Special Education Attorneys & Advocates
Directory of Attorneys & Advocates in MA
<https://spanmass.org/professional-directory.html>
Searchable by zip, disability, and language
SPAN Advocates in Central Mass: https://spanmass-portal.org/listing_central

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates: copaa.org

- ❖ National Professional Association for Special Education Attorneys & Advocates
Directory of Attorneys & Advocates Nationally
<https://www.copaa.org/page/Direct>
Searchable by state

Disability Law Center in Massachusetts dlc-ma.org

- ❖ Federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency for Massachusetts.
Investigates discrimination, abuse, neglect or denial of services because of their disability. Focuses on cases that could potentially create systemic change and impact as many people with disabilities as possible.
<https://www.dlc-ma.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Brochure-English.pdf>
800.872.9992 or mail@dlc-ma.org

DESE Problem Resolution System Office <http://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/>

Through its Problem Resolution System (PRS), DESE handles complaints that allege a school or a district is not meeting legal requirements for education. Anyone, including parents, students, educators, community members, and agency representatives, may contact the PRS office for assistance. Each school is assigned a PRS specialist

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/specialist.html#high>

PRS specialists will answer specific questions about regulations and protocol but not give advice

Brookfield	Jennifer Simpson	jennifer.simpson@doe.mass.edu	781-338-3727
Brimfield	Nathon Lemmon	nlemmon@doe.mass.edu	781-338-3720
Holland	Nathon Lemmon	nlemmon@doe.mass.edu	781-338-3720
Sturbridge	Nathon Lemmon	nlemmon@doe.mass.edu	781-338-3720
Wales	Nathon Lemmon	nlemmon@doe.mass.edu	781-338-3720
Tantasqua RSD	Nathon Lemmon	nlemmon@doe.mass.edu	781-338-3720