



Collaborative Guide to Special Education for Maryland Parents and Families



Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is Maryland’s designated Protection & Advocacy agency. DRM is federally mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. We provide free legal services to Marylanders of any age with all types of disabilities (developmental, intellectual, psychiatric, physical, sensory, learning, traumatic brain injury), who live in facilities, in the community or who are homeless. DRM’s Education Unit assists students with all types of disabilities from birth – age 21 in K-12 special education matters.

The Parents’ Place of Maryland (PPMD) is the only organization in Maryland charged by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, to serve as the state’s Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center. PPMD provides training and information to parents of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with all disabilities – physical, cognitive, emotional and learning. PPMD’s Parent Educators are available to help you understand and navigate the special education system and provide you with the information and tools you need to be empowered, informed and an active participant in your child’s education.



Both **DRM and PPMD** provide their services, training, and information at no cost to eligible families. DRM and PPMD have created a number of resources to assist families of students with disabilities access education and special education services during the pandemic. Resources compiled by PPMD can be found [here](#) and resources compiled by DRM can be found [here](#). DRM and PPMD are working together to provide as much information and support to families as possible during this unprecedented time.

Please contact DRM if...	Please contact PPMD if...
You are unaware of your child’s special education rights	You need information, help understanding and navigating the special education process
You believe your child’s rights have been violated	You need help finding resources to address the needs of your child
You need legal advice	You need one-on-one support or training

Below is a sample scenario in which a parent has many concerns throughout the special education process. The scenario highlights the appropriate organization to reach with the various concerns.

DRM		You believe your child needs an IEP but don't know how to request one	→	PPMD
		Your child is denied special education eligibility but you disagree with the decision and need information on what your options are	→	
	←	You need advice on your options for dispute resolution		
		You need help reviewing and understanding reports, documents and the IEP itself	→	
		You need information and support on effectively participating in your child's IEP meeting	→	
		You disagree with the IEP Team about your child's IEP and want to know what your options are to resolve the disagreement	→	
		You want information on how to file a state complaint	→	
	←	You disagree with the IEP Team and want someone to attend the IEP meeting with you		
	←	You are considering filing for mediation or a due process hearing and want advice		
	←	Your child with a disability has been suspended and you need advice on what to do		
	←	Your child with a disability has been criminally charged with violating the school's student code of conduct		
	←	Your child with a disability has been interviewed by law enforcement while in school		
	←	Your child with a disability has been suspended and the school wants to hold a Manifestation Determination Hearing		