

## **What should I do if I want to be a surrogate parent, or if I have additional questions?**

For information about becoming or remaining a surrogate parent, contact the principal at your child's school, the special education director at your local school district, or your education service center.

Useful information about special education in general can be found at the Texas Education Agency website at [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) or Texas Project FIRST at [www.texasprojectfirst.org](http://www.texasprojectfirst.org)



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## **What is a Surrogate Parent?**



**Statewide Parent Coordination Network**

*A Leadership Function of the Texas Education Agency*

## What are the responsibilities of a surrogate parent?

In Texas, surrogate parents are required to:

- Agree to complete a training program.
- Visit the child and the child's school on a regular basis.
- Consult with persons involved in the child's education.
- Review the child's educational records.
- Attend Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meetings.
- Exercise independent judgment in pursuing the child's interests.
- Exercise the child's due process rights, when needed.

Additional activities for a surrogate parent include:

- Learn about the student's background and educational history.
- Know the child's interests, strengths and weaknesses.
- Observe the child at school and in other environments.
- Meet with the child's teacher(s), principal and other professionals working with the child.
- Keep a record of all activities in accordance with the school district requirements for surrogates.
- Review school records, particularly the current evaluation, placement, and services.

## What is a surrogate parent?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that state and local school systems involve parents in decisions regarding their child's needs. In cases where the child has no parents, none can be located, or the child is a ward of the state, a parent surrogate must be appointed to represent the child and protect the child's rights in relation to identification, evaluation, and placement in a special education program. A surrogate parent must complete required training regarding special education laws, rules, procedures, and due process rights pertaining to a child with a disability and be willing to put in the time to adequately represent the best interests of the child.

## Who is not eligible to be a surrogate parent?

Anyone who is an employee of the local education agency, the local school district, or anyone who has a conflict of interest cannot serve as a surrogate parent.



- Maintain confidentiality to protect the student's privacy.
- Ask questions concerning anything you do not understand.
- Be familiar with all aspects of the child to become an effective and informed advocate.

## What does a surrogate parent need to know?

- Identification of a student with a disability
- Collection of evaluation and reevaluation data relating to a student with a disability
- Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee process
- Development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and, for a student who is at least 16 years of age, transition services
- Determination of least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Implementation of an IEP
- Procedural rights and safeguards
- Sources to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the

laws, rules and regulations relating  
to students with disabilities