



**BRIGHTSIDE**  
LAW GROUP

## SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORD KEEPING

One of the most important things a parent can do is keep good records and stay organized.

FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY  
BASED ON CA SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW

[www.brightsidelawgroup.com](http://www.brightsidelawgroup.com)

# DOCUMENT AND STAY ORGANIZED

Special education takes place over years. It can be difficult to go back and piece together information when you need it.

- **Keep your child's school records.**

Schools create most educational records. Some documents are not kept by the school or get lost over time. It is important to maintain your own copies.

- **Save the records that you create.**

The school's records do not tell the whole story. Save your emails with school staff and copies of any information you provide to the school.

- **Staying organized is important.**

Having records when you need them saves time and lets you focus on your child. Keep records in a box or organized in a binder. When you need something you will know where to find it.



# ORGANIZING YOUR RECORDS

Set reasonable goals to get organized. Put your child's records together in one place, like a drawer or a box. When you find time, you can take your organization to the next level!

- **Organize records chronologically.**

Make sure each document is complete, with all of the pages and paperclip them together. Put them in order by date. Place the most recent documents last so they read like a story.

- **Place documents in a 3-ring binder.**

Using a binder keeps your records together and easy to access when you need them.

- **Make your binder easy to navigate.**

Add dividers for each calendar year. Use colored page markers to identify specific documents you may want to quickly refer to, like assessments or IEPs.



# SCHOOL RECORDS

Keep a copy of records created by the school. Print digital copies and scan paper copies of documents that you receive. Always save digital copies to your own computer.

- **Make sure you have complete documents.**

Check each document for the correct number of pages or parts, such as meeting notes or signature pages. If you suspect the document is incomplete, ask the school for another copy.

- **Check for dates and page numbers!**

Make sure the document has the correct date you received it and has page numbers. Add the date and page numbers if they are not there.

- **Keep clean copies of your child's records.**

If you want to add notes or highlight parts of the document, add a separate page to the back or use another copy of the document.



# REQUESTING SCHOOL RECORDS

In CA you have a right to receive copies of all of your child's educational records within 5 business days after a request is made.

## ● How do you get your child's records?

Send an email to the teacher, or the IEP case manager, asking for copies of all of your child's special and general education records.

## ● What records should you receive?

You will only receive records that contain information directly related to your child that are regularly maintained by the school.

For example, you can expect to receive documents like past assessments, IEPs, progress reports, and report cards.

## ● What if records are missing?

If you know records are missing, follow up explaining what you did not receive. If you still cannot get the records you can file a formal compliance complaint.



# PARENT RECORDS

You have the opportunity to create and document information that will help tell your story.

- **Follow up on conversations in writing.**

If you speak to someone about your child, follow up in writing to document the communication. "If it's not in writing, it never happened."

- **Keep your electronic communications.**

Make sure you have physical copies and digital backups of your electronic communications, such as email or text messages.

- **Save hand written and signed documents.**

Copy or scan any documents with handwriting on them. Remember, every document should have dates and page numbers on them!

- **Copy or print school related information.**

Print copies of documents from online services like Google Docs or ClassDojo.



# USING EMAIL

Create an email account to communicate with the school about your child's educational needs. Use a reliable provider like Gmail that is unlikely to change.

- **Use email to document conversations.**

Whenever you have a meeting or conversation, always follow up in writing to make sure you are on the same page and have the right info.

- **Create a timeline by emailing yourself!**

Use your email like a journal. Send yourself information or a description of an event when it happens. You will have the date, time, and information when you need it.

- **Keep track of what you give the school.**

Emailing records to the school or returning signed copies ensures that you can show they received them.



# CELL PHONE ESSENTIALS

Your cell phone is a powerful tool to communicate and document interactions with the school. With the right apps documentation is easy.

- **Scan documents on your phone.**

Turn your cell phone into a scanner with an app like "Tiny Scanner." Save documents as PDFs!

- **Audio record your child's IEP meetings.**

Record IEP meetings with 24 hour written notice using your phone in airplane mode.

- **Use email to create a record.**

As things happen, send yourself an email about your concerns and who is involved.

- **Backup your text messages.**

If you are text messaging, make sure you keep a backup, printout or screenshot.

- **Take pictures and make videos.**

Have a concern that's hard to explain? Take a video or photo for the IEP team.







# BRIGHTSIDE

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Having good documentation and staying organized saves you time and energy in the long run.

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