



The Parent Information Center of Delaware

Inform. Educate. Advocate.

EDUCATION CONNECTION



Fall Edition - Sept. 2019—Nov. 2019

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Mission

Advancing effective parent engagement in education. We are especially focused on supporting parents of children with disabilities and youth self-advocates to assist them in gaining the knowledge and skills to access appropriate special education programs and related services.

About PIC

PIC is home to Delaware's Parent Training and Information Center, (PTI)

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PIC Partners to Better Serve Military-Connected Families

Our military families are an important and essential part of our Delaware community. From those in active duty at Dover Air Force Base, the Coast Guard, the National Guard and Reserves, to the amazing veterans from all branches and their families settling into civilian life, here at PIC there are a number of ways we are supporting military families and their diverse needs.

Our first step was to begin to work collaboratively with the School Liaison Officer (SLO) at Dover AFB, Laurie Sisk. SLOs connect students and families with information, resources and people. They are the point of contact between an installations military families, local schools and school districts. They are experts in the complications that can come up when a family has a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) to a new duty station. We are also excited to work with the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) School Program Director, Sonya Dyer. EMFP is a Department of Defense program that helps military dependents with special needs. The Coast Guard, which operates under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security has a similar program called the Special Needs Program, or SNP.

Along with referrals to PIC for families requesting additional assistance in advocating for their children, we are also committed to collaborative workshops, webinars, and events.



Resources unique to military families are also available on our website at <https://picofdel.org/type/resources-for-military-families/>.



Right now, an issue that is critical for many military families is transition for their children to a new community and school. Here are some tips for families that have just moved to Delaware.

- Organize School Records & Compile School Contact Information
- Familiarize Yourself with the School Curriculum & Code of Conduct
- Know Your Child's Interests and Explore Clubs & Extracurricular Activities
- Get To Know Your Local School Board
- Meet With the School's Educational Diagnostician
- Get Familiar with the Interstate Compact (<https://www.mic3.net/assets/delaware-compact-language.pdf>)

Take Advantage of Military Parent Resources

- Visit the PIC website at <http://www.picofdel.org>
- Join the PIC Facebook Page: Parent Information Center of Delaware: <https://www.facebook.com/picofdel/>
- **A Military Family's Guide to School Transitions:** https://www.militarychild.org/upload/files/resources/Military_Families_Checklist_Scho.pdf

What's Transition and Why is it so Important?

For students with disabilities, the teen years can be a time of change, uncertainty, and incredible growth. As these students are beginning to figure out their next steps after high school, there are some supports put into place that will assist with this process. If a student has an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**, you will begin discussing your plans to graduate, which includes what skills you'll need to attend school, work and live as independently as possible. This process is called **Transition**, and it's a big deal! You'll begin these discussions when you turn 14 or start the eighth grade.

At the Parent Information Center of Delaware (PIC), there are many ways in which we provide assistance and support to families beginning the Transition IEP process. These supports include one on one technical assistance, in person workshops, online webinars, Facebook Live presentations, and informational Fact Sheets. Our goal is to make sure families understand what is required, have knowledge about the IEP process and IDEA, are comfortable advocating for their teen, and encouraging their teen to advocate for themselves.

Online Resources for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities:

Parent Information Center of Delaware <https://picofdel.org/type/students-and-young-adults-with-disabilities-ages-13-26/>

Delaware Department of Education <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/2342>

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/2335>

<https://deldhub.gacec.delaware.gov/>

Included with the End in Mind—by Dr. Amy Pleet Odle <https://tinyurl.com/wwmfl3p>



How can I prepare for my next IEP meeting?

Learn more about the IEP process, including the IEP document. You should know about the supports it says you should have in school.

- Learn more about your disability and how it affects your learning in school.
- What do you need that would better support your learning? How do you ask for help in school?
- Consider actively participating or leading your next IEP meeting. Think of what you need to help you be more successful in school. Talk with your family and teachers about your goals and how they can support you.
- Ask about Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) services, DDDS, (Division for Developmental Disabilities Services) and how they may be able to help you once you graduate.
- Call PIC if you have questions about your IEP or 504 plan, supports to help you graduate, or to discuss your options once you graduate.
- **Believe in your abilities—You've Got this!**



If it is not realistic, even with appropriate supports and accommodations, for a student with a disability to earn all of the required credits and receive a regular high school diploma, the student can, by meeting the goals in their IEP, earn a Delaware Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards. **(Note: A student's right to receive special education ends if the student earns a regular high school diploma. However, the student would remain eligible for continuing special education through age 21, even if the student earns a Delaware Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards.)**

What you should know about Bullying

More than one out of every five (20.8%) students report being bullied (*National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016*). Here's what you should know about bullying, the rights and responsibilities of students, families and the school, and steps you can take if your child reports bullying or has been accused of bullying.

Bullying: means *any intentional written, electronic, verbal or physical act or actions against another student, school volunteer or school employee—with an intent to cause harm, create an imbalance of power, and is repetitive.*

Bullying can create a hostile environment, making it very difficult to learn or feel safe. For students with disabilities entitled to FAPE, under Section 504 Title II or IDEA, bullying may result in a denial of FAPE. For Delaware's full definition of bullying click [HERE](#). Or you can visit the bullying resources page at <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/3311>

What does your child's school anti-bullying policy say?

Find out either through the student code of conduct, or ask the principal for a copy of the bullying policy. Policies also outline the process for reporting incidents to the school, and additional steps that may be required. Here's a link to find your child's school districts' policy <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/3323>

Notification of Bullying: Delaware requires all reported incidents of bullying, whether substantiated or not, be reported to the Delaware Department of Education. Delaware also requires parents are notified in writing of the incident, including the role of the Department of Justice School Ombudsman with contact information. This notification shall also inform parents, guardians, or relative caregivers of their right to know when the bullying incident in question has been reported to the Delaware Department of Education.

Take Action! - If your child reports bullying, notify the school immediately, in writing. Reach out to the teacher or principal to gather information about the incident, and request a meeting if necessary.

Documentation is Key: Remember if it's not in writing, it doesn't exist. Be sure to keep copies of any conversations, calls and emails. This can be used to keep accurate timelines of incidents when communicating with the school.

Talk with your child: Express your concern and make it clear you want to help.

The Delaware Department of Justice has a School Ombudsman who can assist with bullying issues by calling the hotline, **1-800-220-5414**.

IDEA Full Funding Act

In 1975, Congress passed an important federal law called the Education for All Handicapped Children Act which gave extensive rights to children with disabilities and their families. (*Congress has amended that law several times since then, and the law is now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA*.) In the law, as enacted in 1975, Congress made a commitment to eventually provide states with 40% of what is called the "excess cost" of providing special education services to children with disabilities. Excess cost means the additional cost of providing education to children with disabilities as compared to the cost of educating children without disabilities. This promise to provide states with 40% of the excess cost of providing education to children with disabilities is referred to as a promise to provide "**full funding under the IDEA**".

While there have been increases in the amount of federal funding provided to states for special education, the Congress has never come close to providing states with the full

40%. In March 2019, proposed legislation called the **IDEA Full Funding Act** was introduced into both the House of Representatives (House Bill 1878) and Senate (Senate Bill 866). As of now, the House Bill has bipartisanship of 115 co-sponsors, and the Senate Bill has 11 co-sponsors. If passed, the proposed IDEA Full Funding Act would include a firm commitment to increase funding from year to year consistent with a schedule until full funding is reached. For years, the need for full funding under the IDEA has been strongly supported by parent and other advocacy groups, as well as organizations that represent states, school districts, teachers, and other groups invested in the education of children both with and without disabilities. Unsuccessful attempts have been made over the years to IDEA full funding legislation, but advocates are hopeful that broad-based support from both members of the Congress advocacy groups and individuals will result in IDEA full funding becoming a reality.



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A Word from PIC's Executive Director



Parent Information Center of Delaware's (PIC) mission is to advance effective engagement in education by providing information, education and support to increase family en-

gagement in schools and improve outcomes for children and young adults with disabilities. In order for students to truly achieve success in school, environments have to be created where families are true partners at the table. In order for your voice to be heard, you must be at the tables where the decisions are being made. Students and families often hold the questions and answers needed for change! Joining or leading a school or advocacy group, is a great way to meet and share experiences with other families, build partnerships, learn more about schoolwide, district and state education policies and initiatives, and improve outcomes for all students in the school. There are many opportunities to have your voice heard in education. Here's a list of some ways you can get involved:

- **School District Parent Councils serving students with Disabilities**
- **PTA/PTO (Parent Teacher Associations—Parent Teacher Organizations)**

- **School & District Parent Advisory Councils**
- **Community Led Parent Advisory Groups**
- **Your district school board meetings, and more!**

Check with your school district or charter school to get more information on upcoming meetings.

There are also a number of statewide organizations and initiatives where families can participate. For more information, visit Delaware.gov. While participation is important, understanding your personal leadership qualities and partnering with experienced mentors, are essential tools for effective systemic change. PIC is hosting two upcoming events geared to supporting student and parent leadership, with opportunities to build upon existing leadership skills, work with other families, community/educational advocates and professionals, and learn strategies for effective facilitation and participation in initiatives aimed at improving education outcomes for students. Working together in partnership is the key to changing the education landscape in Delaware! Stay tuned for more info and open registration!

Student Leadership Conference - March 14, 2020

Education Symposium: Parent's Are the Key Leadership Conference - April 18 & 19, 2020