

The Legal Center for Special Education

ASK Family Resource Center
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The Legal Center for Special Education (“TLC”) is a non-profit corporation created to provide effective, low-cost, and readily available legal and advocacy services for parents of children with disabilities across the State of Iowa. As our name implies, TLC’s focus is on issues concerning the educational rights of children with disabilities, and on issues involving services and supports related to educational development.

The Legal Center actively promotes the use of non-adversarial methods of conflict resolution in disputes between parents and school officials, with an emphasis on building long-term, constructive relationships between parents and schools. TLC also encourages the development of effective parental self-advocacy skills through information and consultation. In cases where conflict resolution is not successful, TLC provides legal representation in administrative or court actions to enforce the rights of children with disabilities to an appropriate public education.

All communications between TLC and families who engage our services are confidential and are protected by attorney-client privilege. TLC offers four levels of advocacy services:

- Consultation and Self-Advocacy Training
- Representation in Pre-Appeal conferences or other conflict resolution activities
- Representation in Due Process Proceedings or similar administrative actions
- Representation in court actions to enforce legal rights

In the interest of saving costs to parents, and of using all existing resources efficiently, we ask parents to explore other available sources of support and assistance before seeking legal services, including, local school district resources, area Parent-Educators (PEC), the Parent Training and Information Center of Iowa (PTI), and statewide advocacy organizations.

TLC relies on multiple sources of funding to meet the needs of families who request our services, including a grant from the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, fees recovered from other participants in conflict resolution or legal actions, contributions, and reduced-rate fees charged to parents. Our special rates to parents for expert attorney time are \$25 per hour for families with household incomes up to \$50,000, \$50 per hour for family incomes from \$50,000 to \$85,000, and \$75 per hour for family incomes over \$85,000. So long as our resources allow, parents in need of legal services on behalf of their child with disabilities will not be turned away because of an inability to pay. Tax-deductible contributions are always welcome and assist us in meeting the needs of all families who seek our services.