



A Project of Massachusetts Advocates for Children

The Somerville Special Education Advocacy Project is here to help!



Who's Who in Somerville Special Education

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

Debby Higgins (617) 625-6600 x6800

Special Education Director

Louis Piacentini (617) 625-6600 x6800

Transportation Information

(617) 625-6600 x6850

Superintendent

Anthony Pierantozzi (617) 625-6600 x6005

Parent Information Center

(617) 625-6600 x6961

Program Quality Assurance at the DOE (for Complaints)

Lindsey McGovern (781) 338-3700

Other Resources

Massachusetts Advocates for Children
617-357-8431
www.massadvocates.org

MASSPAC
www.masspac.org

Department of Education
781-338-3000
www.doe.ma.edu

The Disability Law Center
617-723-8455
www.dlc-ma.org

The Federation for Children with Special Needs
617-236-7210
www.fcsn.org

Your local Representative:
Rep. Carl Sciortino 617-722-2425
Rep. Timothy Toomey Jr. 617-722-2230
third seat currently vacant

Your local Senator:
Sen. Jared Barrios 617-722-1650 or
Sen. Patricia Jehlen 617-722-1578

SSEAP can help families by answering your questions, including:

- How to prepare for a Team meeting
- What to do if you disagree with the Team
- What to do if you don't speak English or have limited English skills
- How to know if your child is getting the right services
- What the special education timelines are
- How to help children with special needs regarding MCAS
- What to do if your child isn't getting what he/she needs



The Somerville Special Education Advocacy Project

A Resource for Parents of Children with Special Needs



A Project of
MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES for CHILDREN

**The Somerville Special Education Advocacy Project
c/o Massachusetts Advocates for Children**

100 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 617-357-8431
ext. 234 for information/workshops
ext. 224 for help with your child

Fax: 617-357-8438



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- Do you need help getting services for your child with special needs?
- Do you need help understanding your legal rights in the special education process?
- Are you confused about special education procedures?

SSEAP—A Project of



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About the Somerville Special Education Advocacy Project



What is the Somerville Special Education Advocacy Project?

The Somerville Special Education Advocacy Project was created to provide advocacy resources to families of children with special needs in Somerville. These resources, provided through the generosity of a Somerville family, will help to ensure that the school district meets federal and state special education requirements and maintains high quality education programs for its children with special needs.

What services do we provide to the community?

- Community workshops
- Free technical assistance, legal advice and referral services
- Free legal advocacy (for a limited number of cases)
- Administrative advocacy



Who is a child with special needs?

Special education provides services for children with all types of special needs. It can include students with:

- learning disabilities
- social/emotional disabilities
- Autism (PDD or Asperger's)
- physical disabilities
- mental retardation
- behavioral challenges
- ADD/ADHD
- as well as a wide variety of other needs.

sseap

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Know your rights!

Both federal and state law provide very strong protections for children with special needs.

- The right to be involved in deciding what services your child needs
- The right to have your child evaluated in all areas of concern
- The right to have services and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) based on your child's unique needs (academic, behavioral, social/emotional, self care, vocational, etc.)
- The right for your child to participate as much as possible with children without special needs
- The right for your child to receive services without delays
- The right to have all communications translated into your native language if English is not your first language
- The right for your child to receive services needed to pass MCAS

In determining services for your child, the IEP Team cannot consider:

- Case load limits or schedule difficulties
- Lack of openings in programs
- School district policies or practices that limit services