



Michigan Children's Law Center

Education Advocacy Unit

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Advocating for the safety and well-being of children

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What is the Education Advocacy Unit?

The Education Advocacy Unit (EAU) is a group of education attorneys within the Michigan Children's Law Center (MCLC) that focuses its efforts on addressing the educational needs of the children it represents. These efforts typically center on three main areas of education law.

First, the EAU advocates for children who have undiagnosed or unmet special education needs.

As part of this effort, the EAU helps these children obtain professional evaluations to determine whether they are eligible for special education services, ensures that any eligible child receives an Individualized Education Program (IEP), monitors the child's IEP to make sure that the services called for in the IEP are provided and determines if other services are needed, and ensures that families are able to access the educational and due process rights provided under federal and state law.

Second, the EAU addresses education issues related to enrollment, records transfer, and transportation.

Third, the EAU advocates for children involved in school disciplinary matters.

This includes working with school staff and parents to address patterns of poor behavior in school, representing children facing suspension or expulsion, and defending children in court against any delinquency charges stemming from issues at school.

By taking this holistic approach to child advocacy and addressing the education needs of these children, MCLC eliminates many of the academic and behavioral issues that undermine permanency plans of foster care children, and result in their exclusion from or their dropping out of school, and/or lead youth into the juvenile justice system, or worse, the school to prison pipeline.

What kind of cases does the EAU handle?

The EAU handles all of the following types of cases, and more:

- Enrolling in school,
- Requesting an evaluation for special education/an IEP,
- Requesting an IEP (Individual Education Plan) when the student meets criteria,
- Monitor implementation, continuing effectiveness of IEP,
- Obtain the appropriate services for a child who already has an IEP,
- Transferring records to a new school,
- Maintaining current school placement in spite of placement change,
- Providing transportation to allow student to remain in current school,
- Resolving school discipline problems (truancy, suspensions, expulsions),
- Representing students facing school discipline.

This is not an exclusive list. Please call the unit if your issue is not listed above. We'll try to help.