

FHF of Acadiana's Education Liaison Policy

Our services: Families Helping Families of Acadiana Education Liaisons serve the school districts included in our contract with the Louisiana Department of Education: Acadia Parish, Evangeline Parish, Iberia Parish, Lafayette Parish, St. Landry Parish, St. Martin Parish, and Vermillion Parish. All verbal and printed information provided to the Liaisons is highly confidential. This information will never be shared or forwarded to anyone without parents/guardians expressed written consent. Our goal is to educate and empower parents/guardians of children receiving special education/504 services to understand and be involved in their child's educational needs.

Our Education Liaisons are not lawyers, counselors, or medical professionals. They do not have any legal expertise and their services do not substitute for legal counsel in any situation. However, they ARE parents of children with disabilities, with of experience of navigating the education system and advocating for their children. They are also professionals who have additional professional development and training to enable them to provide effective guidance and support for other parents who are in the same situation they experienced – committed to learning about the education process, their rights and options, and how to be effective advocates for their children. Our Education Liaisons will provide resources, training, and guidance – they cannot speak for you, or make decisions on your behalf, but they can make certain you understand all of the options available to you and your child.

- We work one on one with parents to make sure each child's unique needs are identified and addressed in their individual educational plan (IEP).
- We answer parent's questions and address their concerns as they arise throughout the school year.
- We offer technical assistance to schools and families in order to better meet students' needs.
- We provide parents tools such as documents that will help them be prepared and organized in their child's education, as well as having parents check out books from our Lending Library. (These books include but are not limited to: Special Education laws, parent/student rights, diagnosis specific information, related services information, inclusion best practices, etc.) We empower parents by giving them information to educate you on your rights and responsibilities, your child's rights and help you to become familiar with special education laws and effective advocacy.
- Because our service area is so large, we have a high volume of calls and appointments. We strive to return calls and emails within 48 hours after receiving them. We thank parents for their understanding.
- We host numerous, free workshops, webinars, and presentations throughout Acadiana each year addressing many special education issues so parents can be informed and knowledgeable before a crisis occurs in their child's education. Attendance by our families is highly encouraged!
- **PLEASE NOTE:** Liaison will attend school meetings only if absolutely necessary; priority will be given to parents who have attended FHF of Acadiana education workshops/conferences in the past. Requesting this service must be done at least seven days prior to the date of the meeting. This request does not guarantee attendance of the Liaison, as their existing scheduled meetings and trainings are already in place for other families we support.

PLEASE NOTE: In order for our Education Liaison to attend a meeting, parents agree to:

- Provide all applicable documents (consent, school records, etc.) at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting, and to schedule a case conference at least 1 week prior to the meeting. This will allow us to provide effective guidance and strategies to employ at the meeting.
- Alert the Liaison immediately if a scheduled meeting is cancelled. Liaison will wait no longer than 15 minutes if you are running late to a meeting. Please understand they have numerous families to support and their time is limited.
- Attend any training sessions we provide prior to the meeting which are applicable to the meeting.
- Agree to act professionally during the meeting, not disagree openly with the Education Liaison at the meeting, and to inform us of any additional issues (if applicable) which arise after the case conference but prior to the meeting.

FHF of Acadiana Education Liaison Policy Terms & Conditions - Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Each school year, you will be required to fill out FHF of Acadiana's Consent for Disclosure form, an Intake Questionnaire and agree to FHF of Acadiana's Education Liaison Policy Terms and Conditions prior to the case conference/meeting with the Liaison.

- If you have not given consent, you should provide them with copies of all relative school records for your child ASAP including: current IEP or 504, SBLC/SAT forms, suspension/expulsion documents, standardized test/state assessment scores, behavior intervention plan, healthcare plan, current grades, and any other records that may help us to help your child. This can be done by having a copy made in the FHF center, faxing, or scanning and emailing to your Liaison.

- You should be honest with your Education Liaison and reveal all relevant information concerning your child and school. We cannot give you the help you need if we don't know the whole story.

- Schedule a convenient time to come in for a consultation. This may be done by phone as long as the required forms specified above have been received at our office signed and completely filled out. **PLEASE NOTE:** The case conference will need to be scheduled after we receive and review the school records and prior to any meeting you have with the school system. Additionally, consultations will take place via phone conference and/or at the FHF office and will need to be scheduled when the Education Liaisons are scheduled to be in the office. We will contact you by phone and/or email three (3 times) to schedule the consultation. If we are unsuccessful in reaching you, will mail a letter advising of our contact attempts.

- You should know that the Liaison will help you find the information you need to handle an issue and will give you support as you advocate for your child. This includes documents related to your rights and options, websites, and additional training documentation.

- Copy the Liaison on correspondence between you and school personnel.

If there is a dispute between you and your local school district that results in a formal complaint and/or a due process hearing, we will be unable to advise you on any legal matters and will direct you to seek legal counsel.

If the issue for which you are seeking assistance includes expulsions, or allegations of illegal drugs, bodily harm to others, threat of school violence, or personnel issues (not related to education issues for which we provide support), we will be unable to provide guidance, and will refer you to agencies which can assist in these matters.

Liaisons work between the hours of 8am – 4pm Monday through Thursday and 8am-12pm on Friday. Please do not contact them outside of business hours as this is their time with their own family. When leaving a voicemail or emailing them, you can expect their response within 48 hours.

It is expressly understood that this service is not to be construed as legal advice or legal services. This is strictly an educational and support service in assisting you to effectively advocate for your child's educational needs.

Parents/Guardians understand that there are no guarantees in any agreement of success in obtaining the services desired by the Parent/Guardian. Liaison attendance at Mediation and/or Impartial Hearings is not in lieu of representation by an attorney. The Parent/Guardian FHF of Acadiana and its Education Liaisons are not responsible for the outcome of advocacy hearings and mediations.

I have read and understand the above "FHF of Acadiana Education Liaison Program Terms and Conditions Parent/Guardian Responsibilities.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

FHF of Acadiana Education Liaison Contact Information:

Education Liaison

Email: info@fhfacadiana.org

Office: 337-984-3458 Fax: 337-984-3468

Families Helping Families of Acadiana Education Intake Form

FHF of Acadiana's hours of operation are Monday - Thursday 8am - 4pm and Fridays 8am - 12:00pm.
Families Helping Families of Acadiana is an IRS approved 501 (c) 3 charitable organization.
All of our programs, services, and resources are free to families of individuals with disabilities in Acadiana.

FHF of Acadiana Education Liaisons are not attorneys and cannot give you legal advice, nor will they represent you regarding any decisions you may choose to make for your child. FHF of Acadiana Education Liaisons may offer support and help you understand your options as a parent but is never intended nor should be construed as legal, medical, or other professional advice.

Parent / Caregiver Information

Email		Telephone	
Parent / Caregiver Printed Name		Relationship to Student	
Address			
City	Parish	State	Zip
Child's Name		Name of School	
Grade	Date of Birth	Exceptionality/Diagnosis	

What type of education plan does your child have:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Accommodations Plan (IAP, commonly known as a 504 plan)
<input type="checkbox"/> My child does not currently have an educational plan. | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Health Plan (IHP)
<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know |
|---|--|

What are your concerns? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior, Social, Emotional Needs
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication needs (includes visual language and Braille)
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistive Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic/Cognitive Concerns (Reading, Writing, Math...)
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Needs
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Functioning (time management, organization, prioritization, study skills) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Needs
<input type="checkbox"/> Motor (fine and gross)
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Help (activities of daily living)
<input type="checkbox"/> Vocational (job related skills)
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Advocacy (ability to express wants, needs and preferences)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other |
|---|--|

What other information would you like our Education Liaison to know?

Disclaimer

Any information provided by Families Helping Families of Acadiana (FHFA) its staff, and/or its volunteers is intended for informational and educational purposes only.

Any information expressed or implied is not intended nor should be construed as legal, medical, or other professional advice.

FHFA does not render legal, medical, or professional advice or recommendations; nor is legal, medical, or other professional advice implied by any information given.

Any information provided should not replace consultations with qualified legal, educational, healthcare, or other professionals to meet individual or professional needs.

Reference to any program, service, therapy, links to external websites, surveys or treatment option does not imply endorsement or support a product, service or opinion by FHFA or by its organizational staff/members and should not be construed as such.

Parent / Caregiver <u>Printed Name</u>	Parent / Caregiver <u>Signature & Date</u> (**Handwritten required)
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Families Helping Families of Acadiana
Consent for Disclosure of Confidential Information

To Whom It May Concern:

I give my permission for Families Helping Families of Acadiana staff to work with my family. I hereby give you permission to discuss my child's education and school-related issues with them, and to release documents to them as indicated below:

Student / Parent / Caregiver Information

Name of School	Grade	Date of Birth	Gender
Name of Student			
Address			
City	Parish	State	Zip
Parent / Caregiver Printed Name		Relationship to Student	
Telephone		Email	

I hereby grant permission for the release of the following records:

<input type="checkbox"/> IEP/Transition Plans <input type="checkbox"/> IAP/504 Plans <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Intervention Plans <input type="checkbox"/> Functional Behavior Assessments	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication Plans <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline Records <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance Records <input type="checkbox"/> Health Records <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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Any information expressed or implied is not intended nor should be construed as legal, medical, or other professional advice.

FHFA does not render legal, medical, or professional advice or recommendations; nor is legal, medical, or other professional advice implied by any information given.

Any information provided should not replace consultations with qualified legal, educational, healthcare, or other professionals to meet individual or professional needs.

Reference to any program, service, therapy, links to external websites, surveys or treatment option does not imply endorsement or support a product, service or opinion by FHFA or by its organizational staff/members and should not be construed as such.

Parent / Caregiver <u>Printed Name</u>	Parent / Caregiver <u>Signature & Date</u> (**Handwritten required)
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