

## What is a Special Education Surrogate Parent?

- SESPs are volunteers who utilize their skills and expertise to provide a voice of advocacy for students in state custody with special education needs.
- SESPs are an important member of the special education Team, working as a partner with schools, DCF and program providers, to promote positive educational outcomes.
- SESPs are officially appointed to their students by the Special Education Surrogate Parent Program in accordance with both Federal & State Regulations.
- SESPs have met the Federal & State application requirements of the Program.

## Volunteer Opportunity

A child in state custody who requires special education needs *you* to become an important member of their team

In accordance with the direction of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Special Education Surrogate Parent Program responds to the mandates of federal special education laws which require that procedures be in place to protect the special educational rights of all children who may require special education services, including those who are in the care or custody of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or whose parents are unknown or unavailable, and ensure that the rights of these children to benefit from a free and appropriate public education are protected.

### Vision Statement

The vision of the Special Education Surrogate Parent Program is to provide an educational pathway to success for children and youth in state custody.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Special Education Surrogate Parent Program is to promote positive educational outcomes for children and youth in state custody by providing volunteers to represent their best interests in the special education process.

The SESPP is a project of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education under contract with the EDCO Collaborative and the Federation for Children with Special Needs

[www.sespprogram.org](http://www.sespprogram.org)

[www.fcsn.org/rtsc](http://www.fcsn.org/rtsc)

They need more than a classroom.  
They need a *voice*.



sespp

SPECIAL EDUCATION SURROGATE PARENT PROGRAM

# Role of the Special Education Surrogate Parent

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## Special Education Surrogate Parent

- Request copies of all evaluations and records from the school district.
- Sign consent for initial evaluation and re-evaluation.
- Meet the student, when appropriate, before making any special education decisions.
- Observe the student in the classroom.
- Visit any proposed educational placements.
- Sign IEP. (Review, accept/reject & sign.)
- Request additional special education evaluations.
- Request (re)convening of Team.
- Request independent evaluation.
- Pursue the appeals process if necessary.

## DCF Social Worker or Designee

- Enroll student in school.
- Request an initial special education evaluation.
- Sign school related consent forms (i.e., field trips, permission to be photographed, medical releases, etc. but not special education evaluation consent forms.)
- Provide consent for school district to send referral packets to collaborative, day, and residential schools.
- Provide Medicaid or MassHealth related authorization.
- Authorize a student to withdraw from school after the age of sixteen.
- Sign Chapter 688 referral form. (Requires the signature of the student 18 or over, or the student's legal guardian.)
- All other signatures related to regular education and the Section 504 civil rights legislation.

## School District

- Recognize that the Special Education Surrogate Parent (SESP) has the same decision-making rights and responsibilities as any parent of a special education student.
- Schedule IEP meetings at a mutually agreed on time and place in collaboration with the SESP.
- Mail progress reports and report cards to SESP.
- Keep the SESP informed of any changes.
- Maintain communication with the SESP.