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## Contacting the Sherlock Center

### By Mail:

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities  
Rhode Island College  
600 Mount Pleasant Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908-1991

### On the Internet:

<http://www.sherlockcenter.org>

### By Phone:

(401) 456-8072 Voice  
(401) 456-8773 TDD  
(401) 456-1979 Fax\*

*\*Confidential fax to Educational Advocate Program*

### RI Relay:

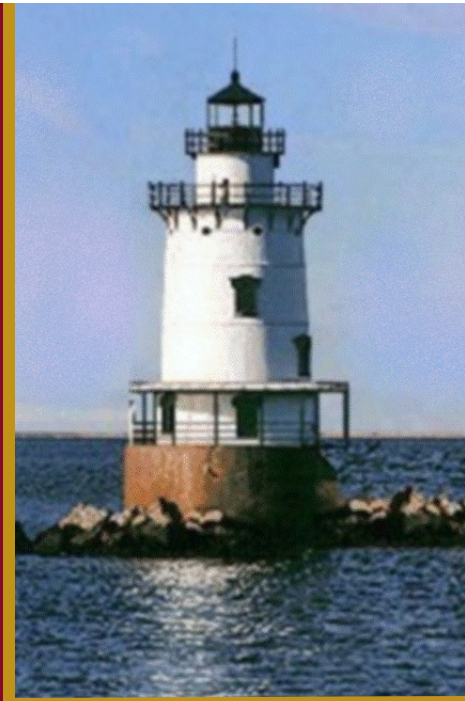
TTY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-745-5555  
Spanish: 7-1-1 or 1-866-355-9214



*Promoting membership in school, work and the community since 1993*

**The Sherlock Center is funded by various federal and state resources.**

## Educational Advocate Program



## Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities



**Promoting Membership in School, Work and Community**

# Educational Advocate Program

## ***What Is an Educational Advocate?***

An Educational Advocate is a person appointed by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) to make educational decisions for students with disabilities who **are in the care of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)** and whose parents are not available to act on their behalf.

## ***Who Is Eligible for an Educational Advocate?***

According to a Federal Court Consent Order, all students with disabilities who are in the care of the state as a result of the filing of abuse, neglect or dependency petitions are eligible. This includes youngsters who have already been found eligible for special education services and those who are "suspected" of having a disability. Students who are in DCYF's care as a result of wayward/delinquent findings may be eligible when they are placed out of the home and the parent is unavailable.

## ***How Does a Student Get an Educational Advocate?***

The DCYF caseworker must make a referral to DCYF's Educational Resource Coordinator who makes an initial determination of whether the youngster is eligible, and if so, sends the referral to the Rhode Island Department of Education. If RIDE agrees that the youngster is eligible, an advocate is appointed. In some situations the parent will be appointed, while in others a foster parent or professional advocate may be appointed.

## ***What Does an Educational Advocate Do?***

An Educational Advocate acts in the place of a parent who is unavailable to exercise the rights of youngsters in state care in the same manner as a parent would. S/he reviews school records, visits school placements, consents to educational testing/records release, attends IEP meetings, and agrees or disagrees with proposed educational placements.

## ***What Can't an Educational Advocate Do?***

Educational Advocates cannot enroll children in school, pick them up when the school wants to send them home, or sign a student out of school. They cannot make medical decisions, consent to the release of information that is not educational in nature, or control living arrangements.

## ***Who Can Enroll a Student in School?***

It is the responsibility of the DCYF worker to ensure that a youngster is enrolled in school. Usually the worker assigns that task to foster parents or group home/shelter staff. DCYF provides the student identification card and immunization verification to the person enrolling the student. Other school records are not necessary for enrollment, although they are very helpful. A student with a DCYF identification card may not be denied admission to a public school. Verification of immunizations should be provided by the sending school within 10 days.

## ***Who Can Sign School Forms?***

Only a parent/guardian or Educational Advocate is authorized to sign special education forms, consent to evaluations, etc. Foster parents are not authorized to sign unless they have been appointed to act as the Educational Advocate. DCYF workers and group home staff are never authorized to sign any special education paperwork.

## ***Who Can Sign Medical Releases?***

When medical releases or consent for provision of medical services are necessary, the DCYF worker must obtain consent from the parent or legal guardian.



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***[www.sherlockcenter.org](http://www.sherlockcenter.org)***