

### Importance of Reviewing Your Child's School Records

#### Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

As a parent of a child with a disability, reviewing your child's educational records is more than a good idea— it's a **legal right and a powerful tool**. Your **child's records help tell the story** of their learning, services, needs, and progress. They include evaluations, IEPs, discipline reports, and communications that can help you advocate more effectively.

Reviewing these records regularly ensures that:

- You have a **full picture** of your child's educational history and current supports
- You can verify that your child is **receiving the services and accommodations** they are entitled to
- You are **prepared for IEP meetings and better equipped to participate** as an informed and equal member of the IEP team
- You can **catch errors, gaps, or missing documentation** early before they impact your child's education
- You can **provide useful information** to new staff or schools if your child transfers or moves

Educational records are also crucial when there are **disagreements or disputes**. Accurate and complete records provide the necessary documentation if you ever need to file a complaint, attend mediation, or pursue due process. Simply put, **records help protect your child's rights and ensure accountability** in the special education process.

#### What to Look For

When reviewing your child's records, here are some key areas to check:

- **Evaluations and Assessments:** Are they current? Do they reflect your child's needs and strengths?
- **IEPs and 504 Plans:** Are the goals up to date? Are services being provided as written?
- **Discipline Records:** Are any incidents documented that may relate to behavior challenges or disability?
- **Meeting Notes and Communication Logs:** Are there summaries of what has been discussed or promised?
- **Progress Reports:** Are updates on IEP goals included? Is your child making expected progress?
- **Attendance and Grade Reports:** Do they match what you've been told or observed?

#### How to Access the Records

Under the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (**FERPA**), schools must provide parents with access to their child's educational records within **45 calendar days** of receiving a request. If the records include information about more than one student, you only have the right to see the parts related to your child.

## Importance of Reviewing Your Child's School Records

In Virginia, if you're having difficulty accessing records through normal school channels, you may also use the **Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** to request your child's educational records. For more information and timelines, see the PEATC Fact Sheet [Using FOIA to Request Educational Records](#).

### What if Something is Missing or Incorrect?

Under FERPA, if you believe that information in your child's educational record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates privacy rights, you have the right to:

- Request that the school **correct or amend the record**
- Receive a **written response** from the school
- Request a **formal hearing** if the school declines to amend the record
- Submit a **written statement** to be included in the record if the outcome of the hearing does not resolve your concern

You can also ask the school to confirm whether a specific document exists. Be sure to document any discrepancies or missing information for follow-up.

Accurate records are important for ensuring your child receives the right services and supports. Don't hesitate to ask questions or seek clarification.

### Final Tips

- Keep a copy of everything you receive. Consider organizing records by year or topic.
- Bring your notes or copies to IEP meetings so you can refer back to important details.
- Don't wait until there is a problem—review records regularly to stay informed.
- Use a free app like Adobe Scan or Genius Scan to turn photos of documents into PDFs you can save and share easily.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES:

[IDEA-FERPA Crosswalk](#)

[FERPA | Protecting Student Privacy](#)

[FERPA - PEATC Fact Sheet](#)

[How and Why to Obtain Your Child's School Records | GreatSchools](#)

[14 Tips: Reviewing Your Child's Educational Record | Wrightslaw Way](#)

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

For more information about us, please contact:

[www.peatc.org](http://www.peatc.org) | 703-923-0010 | [partners@peatc.org](mailto:partners@peatc.org)

*Hablamos Español. Free and confidential assistance available in 300+ languages.*



The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M200002. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government Project Officer. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Any information contained in this factsheet is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.

