

EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions

What services does the EJP provide?

The EJP helps parents ask for an evaluation to determine if their child has a disability, it assists in ensuring that schools provide appropriate services, and it provides advocacy and consultation regarding a wide range of special education and disability issues.

How much do EJP services cost?

In most cases, there is no charge for our services.

Why is this project important?

Too many students with disabilities receive discipline in school, including suspensions in and out of school, when what they really need is access to a high quality education. Many disabilities also go undetected despite the requirements of federal law. Up to 85 percent of youth in juvenile detention facilities have disabilities that make them eligible for special education services, yet only 37 percent receive these services while in school. Students of color face disproportionate discipline in our system. We want to stop these trends.

Will this project help my child with his or her delinquency charges?

The EJP is not a direct part of the court system, CYFD, or the juvenile justice system. However, obtaining appropriate educational services is linked to reducing recidivism and to a higher chance of graduation. Judges and probation officers always want to know how a child is doing in school. The EJP is a valuable resource for families and students who are motivated to achieve an excellent education.

Who runs the EJP?

The Education Justice Project, or EJP, is a United Way grant-funded collaboration between Pegasus Legal Services for Children, Disability Rights New Mexico, and the Native American Disability Law Center. The project's goals are to provide advocacy and direct legal representation to young people eligible for special education services in Sandoval County who are also involved with, or at risk of involvement in, the juvenile justice system.

How can I connect with the project?

Families: contact Matthew Bernstein, Staff Attorney, Pegasus Legal Services for Children, at 244-1101, or email mbernstein@pegasuslaw.org. Providers interested in training: contact Joan Curtiss, Senior Advocate, DRNM, at 256-3100, or email curtissj@drnm.org.