

APPOINTMENT OF SURROGATE PARENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

The Superintendent or designee shall appoint a surrogate parent to represent a child with disabilities under one or more of the following circumstances: (Government Code 7579.5; 34 CFR 300.515)

1. No parent for the child can be identified.
2. The district, after reasonable efforts, cannot discover the location of a parent or legal guardian of the child.
3. The child is adjudicated a dependent or ward of the court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 300, 601 or 602, and either the court has referred the child for special education and related services or the child has a valid individualized education program (IEP).

(cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program)

A surrogate parent shall not be appointed for a child who is a dependent or ward of the court unless the court specifically limits the rights of the parent/guardian to make educational decisions for the child. In addition, a surrogate parent shall not be appointed for a child who has reached the age of majority unless he/she has been declared incompetent by a court of law. (Government Code 7579.5)

When appointing a surrogate parent, the Superintendent or designee shall give first preference to a relative caretaker, foster parent or court-appointed special advocate, provided any of these individuals exists and is willing to serve. If none of these individuals is willing or able to act as a surrogate parent, the Superintendent or designee shall select the surrogate parent of his/her choice. If the child is moved from the home of the relative caretaker or foster parent who was appointed as a surrogate parent, the Superintendent or designee shall appoint another surrogate parent. (Government Code 7579.5)

As far as practical, a surrogate parent should be culturally sensitive to his/her assigned child. (Government Code 7579.5)

Surrogate parents shall have no vested interests that conflict with the child's educational interests and shall have knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child. If a conflict of interest arises after the appointment of a surrogate parent, the Superintendent or designee shall terminate the appointment and appoint another surrogate parent. (34 CFR 300.515; Government Code 7579.5)

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STUDENTS** (continued)

The surrogate parent shall have all the rights relative to the child's education that a parent has under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC 1414-1487; 34 CFR 300.1-300.756). The surrogate parent may represent the child in all matters relating to identification, assessment, instructional planning and development, educational placement, review and revision of the IEP, and in other matters relating to the provision of a free and appropriate public education. (Education Code 56050; Government Code 7579.5)

In addition, the representation of the surrogate parent shall include the provision of written consent to the IEP including nonemergency medical services, mental health treatment services, and occupational or physical therapy services pursuant to Government Code 7570-7588. The surrogate parent may sign any consent relating to IEP purposes. (Education Code 56050)

The Superintendent or designee shall terminate the appointment of a surrogate parent whenever he/she no longer satisfies the eligibility requirements for surrogate parents as specified above.

Surrogate parents shall volunteer their services to the district and serve without compensation. The district may reimburse them for mileage and other incidental expenses directly associated with their duties as surrogate parents.

(cf. 3350 - Travel Expenses)

Surrogate parents shall have access to the student's school records as necessary to fulfill their responsibilities as surrogate parents and in accordance with Board of Trustees policy and administrative regulation.

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)