

# Introduction

## The Education Practice Kit's Purpose and Organization

Welcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of Children's Law Center's Education Practice Kit, updated as of August 2018. This Practice Kit aims to provide DC child welfare practitioners with easy access to many of the educational resources attorneys and other advocates may need to monitor and address the educational rights and needs for youth. This Practice Kit is primarily designed to serve as a resource for Guardians *ad litem* ("GALs") and attorneys navigating the educational landscape for youth in DC's foster care system or students attending school in the District of Columbia or immediate surrounding school districts. We encourage education attorneys seeking litigation resources, case law, or specific forms not available in this Practice Kit to consult Children's Law Center's Special Education Pro Bono Attorney Training Manual, located on the Children's Law Center's website (<https://www.childrenslawcenter.org/resource/special-education-pro-bono-attorney-training-manual-2018>).

In previous iterations, we aspired to make the Education Practice Kit a "one-stop-shop" for all information pertaining to educational issues affecting students and youth in care and included volumes of forms, documents, and policies as attachments to the Practice Kit. As with the 2017 edition, in this edition, we endeavored to make the Education Practice Kit more user-friendly. We streamlined the Practice Kit to include only the most salient information that may be pertinent to your client work. In reorganizing this Practice Kit, we deliberately removed those attachments that can be found online; in their place, we created documents with links to the relevant websites where you can find particular resources online. There is a document providing all relevant websites to a particular topic at the end of each section. If there are particular documents we have determined to be of utmost importance that are not readily available online, we selectively included them as attachments to this Practice Kit. We believe these changes will enhance your user-experience as you navigate this Practice Kit. If you are seeking particular resources that are not included in the Education Practice Kit or Children's Law Center's Special Education Pro Bono Attorney Training Manual, please contact Children's Law Center's to request the specific documents, and a member of our staff will graciously assist with your request.

For ease of use, we have divided the Practice Kit into different sections based on key topical issues (*i.e.*, school enrollment, school stability, school discipline, etc.). Each section includes: 1) a Section Overview document which summarizes the documents and material included in the section folder and provides a brief summary of the legal citations and resources you may need to reference for more information on the topic; 2) any tips sheets, information sheets, or worksheets the Children's Law Center has created on the topic for practitioners' use; and 3) a document listing

descriptions and corresponding website links for any relevant external resources you may wish to access directly. The Table of Contents provides a comprehensive landscape of the Practice Kit's offerings for ease of use.

The resources identified in the Education Practice Kit are primarily resources from the District of Columbia Public Schools and DC public charter schools. However, since many DC wards attend school in Maryland's Prince George's County, we have also included links and references to PG County Public Schools' policies and certain key Maryland law and regulations where possible.

We have attempted to locate the most current and up-to-date information in all of the areas covered in this Practice Kit to ensure the information is current as of August 2018. This year's edition includes key legislative updates in the District of Columbia, including the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018 and now-implemented provisions of the Enhanced Special Education Services Act of 2014. However, the educational landscape frequently changes. As such, practitioners should independently verify the currentness of guidance and materials contained in this Practice Kit before employing these resources in practice.

We hope you find the contents of the Education Practice Kit useful, and appreciate feedback as to how we can improve this resource in years to come.