
Introduction to Special Education Advocacy - SEAT 1.0

Instructors: Eileen Crumm, Missy Alexander, Juliet Barraza, Paula Senigar

Course Description: This course is intended as an introduction to advocacy for education services for children/youth with special needs. This class is intended for people new to advocacy, who want to increase their understanding of the field of special education advocacy; critical provisions of the federal laws that govern education to students with disabilities; and, increase their knowledge and skills to take the first steps to becoming a special education advocate for students and their families. This class can be taken 'stand-alone' or can be used as a pre-requisite to SEAT 2.0.

Textbooks:

Pam Wright and Pete Wright, From Emotions to Advocacy, second edition.

Lawrence Siegel, The Complete IEP Guide: How to Advocate for Your Special Ed Child, Nolo Press, 9th edition.

WEEK 1: Education is a Civil Right!

Date: August 18, 2017

Learning goals:

1. Students will become familiar with the role of the special education advocate in the IEP/504 process.
2. Students will become familiar with the history of special education in the United States and some of the laws that impacting children in education.
3. Students will become familiar with the wide range of laws impacting children with disabilities in education.

Assigned Reading: Wright and Wright, Chapters 1-3; Siegel Chapter 1 and watch video "Disability law, policy, and Civil Rights movement," University of Wisconsin, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbB3Azlil38>

Topics Covered:

- Brief discussion of the skills and tools needed to become a special education advocate.

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- Brief History of special education and relationship of disability rights to other civil rights
 - Introduction to laws protecting those rights: 504, ADA, IDEA, FERPA, McKinney Vento
 - Discussion of the role of advocate in advancing those rights.

WEEK 2: What make Special Education Special? What is the difference between IDEA and 504 and Student Study Teams?

Date: August 25, 2017

Learning goals:

1. Students will be introduced to the concept of special education.
2. Students will understand the differences between IDEA and 504.
3. Discuss the factors that influence the decision between 504

Assigned Reading: Wright and Wright, Sections 4 - 131-198; Siegel Chapter 2,6,7

Class Activity: TBD

Topics Covered:

- Principles Underlying IDEA
- Eligibility Categories
- Placement, Services, Accommodations and Modifications
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – FAQ and comparison of differences and similarities with IDEA

No Class Sept 1, 2017 - Happy Labor Day!!

WEEK 3: Eligible Child's entitlement to FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education) in LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)

Date: September 8, 2017

Learning Goals:

1. Students will understand the concept of FAPE.
2. Students will be introduced to the ideas of procedural and substantive FAPE

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3. Students will model the process for least restrictive environment for a student

Assigned Reading: Wright and Wright, Section 2 pp. 21-57; Siegel pages 19-22, 302-303

Class Activity: IEP Simulated Discussion about LRE

Topics Covered

- Procedural FAPE
- Substantive FAPE
- Definition of Least Restrictive Environment
- Determining LRE for a student
- Recent case law on FAPE (Endrew F)

QUIZ: There is a short quiz at _____ that students are expected to complete by September 15, 2017.

WEEK 4: The IEP Process

Date: September 15, 2017

Learning Goals:

1. Students will understand all the parts of the IEP process and the timelines
2. Students will become familiar with procedural safeguards

Assigned Reading: Wright and Wright, Section 3 pg 59-114; Siegel Chapters 13 and 14

Class Activity: Anatomy of a Compliance Complaint

Topics Covered:

- Tasks/Timelines of the IEP Process
- Prior Written Notice (PWN)
- Extended School Year (ESY)
- Compensatory Education
- Compliance Complaints
- Mediation
- Resolution Session
- Due Process

WEEK 5: The IEP Document and Special Education Services

Date: September 22, 2017

Learning Goals:

1. Students will understand the required components of the IEP document
2. Student will comprehend the significance of the components to the IEP process
3. Building the Case

Assigned Reading: Wright and Wright, Chapter 12; Siegel Chapters 4,8,9,12,13

Class Activity: Hide and Seek, finding components in different areas IEP documents

Topics Covered:

- Parent Concerns
- Categories of Eligibility
- Evaluations
- Present levels of performance
- Special Factors
- Accommodations and Modifications
- The importance of documentation and preserving records

Week 6 – Tests and Measurements

Date: September 29, 2017

Learning Goals:

1. Students will review purpose and use of evaluations—psychological, educational, neuropsychological, psychiatric neurological
2. Students will learn how to understand what these evaluations measure and how to apply results to advocacy for individual child.

Assigned Reading: TBD

Class Activity: TBD

WEEK 7: Basic Advocacy: Written Communications

Date: October 6, 2017

Learning goals:

1. Students will understand the rule, “if it is not written down it does not exist”
2. Students will learn to write clear, professional and persuasive letters in advocating to children

Assigned Reading: Wright and Wright, Chapters 21-24

Class Activity: Critiquing sample letters

Topics Covered:

- Components of a professional letter
- Writing the ‘right’ amount
- Telling the story
- Writing good evidence letters

WEEK 8: Basic Advocacy: Managing the IEP Conversation

Date: October 13, 2017

Learning goals:

1. Students will learn a variety of advocacy strategies to use in IEP meetings

Assigned Reading: Wright and Wright, Chapters 4,5,6,25,26, Siegel Chapters 10-11

Class Activity: Simulated IEP Conversation

Topic Covered:

- Image and Presentation
- Agenda Control
- Preparation
- Organization
- Meaningful Parental Participation
- Informed Consent

Assignment: Letter to the district

WEEK 9: Spotting and researching legal Issues

Date: October 20, 2017

Learning goals:

1. Students will learn some basic ways of getting more information about legal issues
2. Students will understand the concept of unlicensed practice of law

Assigned Reading: Wright and Wright, Chapter 7, Siegel Chapters 14

Class Activity: Spotting legal Issues

Topic Covered:

- Spotting Legal Issues
- Dear Colleague Letters from OCR and OSEP
- Letters of Finding from OCR