



Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11

2527 US Hwy 522 South
McVeytown PA 17051-9717
(814) 542-2501

Surrogate Parent Program Tuscarora IU 11

The surrogate parent program is a response to requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (300.519). It is recognized that special provision must be made to guarantee that children who do not have parents available to act for them nonetheless will have access to the extensive rights and protection afforded by IDEA. On behalf of school districts, the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit coordinates the training and assists the district in the assignment of surrogate parents in compliance with federal IDEA regulations.

- A surrogate parent is someone who may assume the responsibilities in matters relating to identification, evaluation, and educational placement of students for whom no parent or guardian can be identified, or the child is a ward of the state or an unaccompanied homeless youth. Reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure the assignment of a surrogate not more than 30 days after there is a determination that the child needs a surrogate. Surrogate parents are volunteers who are trained by the intermediate unit to serve in this capacity.

A foster parent may be considered a parent for IDEA purposes if the natural parents' authority to make educational decisions on the child's behalf has been extinguished under State law and the foster parent has an ongoing, long-term parental relationship with the child, is willing to make the educational decisions IDEA requires of parents and has no interest that would conflict with the interests of the child. A foster child who has a foster parent who meets these criteria would not need to have a surrogate parent appointed.

Duties of a surrogate parent include becoming familiar with special education regulations, being involved in the MDE/IEP process, and receiving notifications regarding evaluation and/or placement of the student and the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to the child. Training will be provided through the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit.

To qualify as a surrogate parent, individuals must meet the following qualifications:

- Be a volunteer
- Be a person of good character
- Be at least 18 years old
- Possess reasonable abilities to make a decision concerning a student's educational needs
- Be committed to being acquainted with the student's educational needs and with Pennsylvania's educational system
- Have no vested interest that would conflict with the primary allegiance to the student they would represent

For more information, contact:

Kelly Zurybida Surrogate Parent Coordinator
814-542-2501 ext:105
[kzurybida@tiu11.org](mailto: kzurybida@tiu11.org)

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Surrogate Parent Program Identification Procedures Tuscarora IU 11

1. When a child's parent is unknown or unavailable, or when the young child or student is a ward of the state (*a court order exists indicating that parental rights have been removed*), the appointment of a surrogate parent is necessary. In these situations, the local education agency (LEA) representative will contact the IU surrogate Parent Coordinator and attempt to locate an individual in the community who meets the required qualifications:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be a person of good character.
- Be able to make decisions regarding a student's educational needs.
- Be interested in the student's educational needs.
- Have knowledge of Pennsylvania's educational system.
- Not have a vested interest that would conflict with the interests of the student.
- Not be an employee of an agency responsible for the education or care of the student.

2. The District representative (LEA) contacts the proposed surrogate parent to determine if he/she would be willing to participate in the role of surrogate parent.

3. The LEA contacts the Intermediate Unit supervisor who is responsible for surrogate parent training and submits a request form. (*See attached form.*)

4. A meeting is scheduled by the district LEA with the proposed surrogate parent. The Intermediate Unit supervisor who serves as surrogate parent coordinator presents procedural information and the rights of the surrogate parent, while the district LEA adds district specific information. Sample district forms are provided by the LEA. Efforts are made during this training session to ensure that the surrogate parent is as informed as possible about special education rules and regulations and is provided with a copy of the special education forms and formats that are utilized within the local school district.

5. The Intermediate Unit surrogate parent coordinator submits the necessary documentation to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Executive Director or designee of the Intermediate Unit notifies all persons involved in the care and education of the child (agency representatives, district personnel, the assigned surrogate, and the student) of the assignment.

6. Using the identification procedures listed above as a guide, the assignment of a surrogate will be made not more than 30 days after there is a determination by the LEA that the child needs a surrogate.

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TO: Kelly Zurybida, Director of Special Education
Surrogate Parent Program
2527 US Hwy 522 South
McVeytown, PA 17051

This is notification of a student in need of a surrogate parent:

Student Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Foster Parent, Household Adult or Legal Guardian Contact Information:

Agency Responsible for this Student Contact Information:

School District:

Special Education Services

District Administrator Signature:

Date: _____

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Personal Assurance Statement
Surrogate Parent Volunteers

I hereby affirm that:

1. I am a person of good character;
2. I am at least 18 years of age;
3. I possess reasonable abilities to make a decision on a student's educational needs;
4. I am committed to acquainting myself with a student's educational needs and the Pennsylvania educational systems; and,
5. I have no vested interest that would conflict with the interests of the student. I am not an employee of any agency responsible for the education or care of the child.

Surrogate parent volunteer

Date: _____

Address/Phone number:

Email: _____

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Surrogate Parent Training Outline

I. Training of surrogate parents

The surrogate parent training programs should include the following information:

- A. The Law and Implications/Responsibilities and Rights
 - a. Federal law and Regulations
 - b. PA State Laws, Regulations and Standards
 - c. Complaint procedures
 - d. Due Process
 - e. Monitoring

- B. The Special Education Process
 - a. Identification
 - b. Evaluation
 - c. IEP
 - d. Related Services
 - e. Due Process
 - f. Least Restrictive Environment
 - g. Confidentiality

- C. Role of the Surrogate Parent
 - a. Act in place of parents
 - b. Attend meetings
 - c. Represent and make decisions for the child
 - d. Participate in IEP development
 - e. Liability

- D. Resources Available to the Surrogate Parent
 - a. Legal assistance
 - b. Advocacy agencies
 - c. Local Task Force
 - d. Other

*Complete and sign all necessary forms

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Agreement to Serve as a Surrogate Parent

The surrogate parent's primary function is one of representing the student under circumstances where decisions need to be made regarding the student's educational program. The surrogate parent's duties include:

- Approval/disapproval of requests for evaluation/reevaluation
- Initiation of requests for evaluation/reevaluation
- Review of student records and evaluation findings
- Participation in IEP planning meetings
- Approval/disapproval of IEP and/or placement
- Receipt of due process notice (Notice of Recommended Educational Placement)
- Possible initiation of due process procedures

If you have any questions regarding the role of a surrogate parent, please contact Kelly Zurybida, Director of Special Education and Surrogate Parent Coordinator, at the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit office, at 814-542-2501, ext. 105.

I agree to serve as a surrogate parent:

Surrogate Parent Volunteer

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name of Student: _____ DOB _____