



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Student FAQs

Thank you for your interest in Advocates for Children. We receive multiple requests from students each semester, and as we serve an increasing number of families in need, we are generally not able to allot staff time for a one-to-one interview. Below are answers to some frequently asked questions and links to the relevant pages on our website, www.advocatesforchildren.org, where you can find much more information.

What is your mission? What is your strategy for accomplishing it?

Advocates for Children of New York (AFC)'s [mission](#) is to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds. AFC achieves this through [four integrated strategies](#):

- Free advice and legal representation for families who need expert guidance and advocacy to protect their child's education-related rights and obtain needed supports;
- Free [trainings/workshops](#) and [informational publications](#) for parents, students, educators, and other professionals, so that they can solve problems and better advocate for themselves;
- [Policy advocacy](#) to effect change in the education system and improve education outcomes; and
- [Impact litigation](#) to protect the right to quality education and to compel needed reform.

Who is eligible for your services? How much do they cost?

- We serve [New York City students](#) from birth through the transition out of high school, including students with disabilities, immigrant students and English Language Learners, students facing disciplinary issues, students in foster care, youth involved in the juvenile or criminal justice system, students in temporary housing, and LGBTQ youth.
- All our services are free. Our Education Helpline does not have income guidelines—any person in New York City can call. We only provide in-depth case advocacy and legal representation for families that make 250% of the federal poverty level or below.
- We do not consider immigration status.
- We work with an interpretation service that provides translation and interpretation in over 140 languages, and interpreters are available for all interactions as needed, free of charge.

How do families find out about your services/what sort of outreach do you do?

Our Helpline is our primary intake vehicle. Flyers and brochures with information on our services and how to reach us are distributed throughout the year at fairs and workshops in all five boroughs. Our newsletter, which goes out three times per year, has approximately 16,000 subscribers, including most City schools and child care centers. We also [partner](#) with social service providers and community-based organizations working in the areas of child welfare, domestic violence, health care, juvenile justice, immigrant rights, and homelessness.

What's the most common reason families call you/what sorts of issues can you provide help on?

Families call us because their children are struggling in school or experiencing school-based discrimination. The majority are students with disabilities and children of color. We can provide information and assistance on problems related to:

- Bullying;
- Busing and transportation;
- Charter schools;
- Early childhood education programs;
- Enrolling in school, transferring schools, or finding an appropriate school program;
- Promotion and graduation requirements;
- Services for English Language Learners;
- Special education referral, evaluation, and services;
- Suspensions and behavior challenges;
- And more.

How do you measure success/know you are effective at serving your clients?

We successfully resolve education-related problems in 90% of our cases. We track our outcomes via regular follow-up surveys (both online and over the phone), which ask questions about students' academic achievement, behavior, and school attendance, as well as the extent to which parents feel more empowered to navigate the school system and advocate on their own. All information is recorded in our internal client database.

See our [success stories](#) and this [fact sheet](#) for more information on our recent accomplishments.

What does AFC do well/what is the strongest program or aspect of AFC?

The focus, dedication, and passion of our leadership and staff.

Who provides your services?

Please refer to our [leadership and staff](#) information, our page on staff [demographics](#), and our page on our [pro bono program](#).

How is AFC funded?

AFC is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. We receive government grants (such as the U.S. Department of Education grant which funds our Parent Training and Information Center), foundation funding, and contributions from law firms, corporations, and individual donors. [See our website for a list.](#)

Best of luck with your academic work!