

Volunteer to Be an Educational Surrogate Parent!

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is seeking volunteers to serve as educational decision-makers for children who have or who are suspected of having disabilities that require special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This type of decision-maker, called a surrogate parent, is appointed for certain children who do not have an adult in their lives who is able to make decisions regarding their special education needs. Educational surrogate parents are most often appointed for children who are in foster care, are homeless without a parent or for whom a parent is otherwise unable to be identified or located.

What are the requirements to be a surrogate parent?

No previous experience with special education is necessary. OSSE provides all volunteers with a 3-hour training covering the rights and responsibilities of a surrogate parent and the basics of special education. Any adult who is willing to learn about an individual student and his or her needs can be a Surrogate Parent as long as the adult:

- Is at least 21 years of age;
- Is not an employee of OSSE, any Local Education Agency, or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the student;
- Has no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interest of the student;
- Has knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the student; and
- Has received a clearance from the District of Columbia Public School's volunteer office and the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) Child Protection Register.

OSSE's 3-hour training is designed to provide the baseline knowledge and skills needed to be appointed to be a surrogate parent. The training is provided in conjunction with the Children's Law Center (<http://www.childrenslawcenter.org>) and staff at OSSE and the Children's Law Center are also available to surrogates throughout any appointment to provide guidance and additional resources.

Will I receive an appointment immediately?

Not necessarily. After attending the required training and completing or providing copies of required background checks, volunteers will be included in a pool of eligible surrogates to be appointed to children as referrals are made. A number of factors are taken into consideration when making appointments including, but not limited to, language skills, transportation, time availability and expressed volunteer preferences.

What is the time commitment?

Many times the need for a surrogate parent is not identified until there is a situation that needs to be addressed quickly. Appointments in those circumstances may require the surrogate to get up to speed quickly and arrange to meet key individuals as soon as possible. In general, while the time commitment varies by child, it is expected that time commitment for most appointments will be approximately 4 hours per month.

Getting a District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Volunteer Clearance

- **Already have a DCPS clearance in the past 2 years?** Please provide OSSE with a copy of your verification letter by emailing it to surrogate.parent@dc.gov or faxing it to (202) 299-2135 to the attention of Elisabeth Morse/Surrogate Parent Program. There is no need to get another one!
- **Need to start the process?** You can find all of the necessary forms and information on the DCPS website under Parents & Community - Volunteer in Our Schools at:
<http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/Parents+and+Community/Volunteer+in+Our+Schools>
- **Stumped by the TB test requirement?** If you do not have a TB verification that is less than a year old you will need to get one. You can call your regular physician or try one of these locations:

** Please note: This information was compiled through an informal public search and is not in any way an endorsement or guarantee of services or prices.*

- B + W Stat Laboratory, 3104 Georgia Ave. NW, 20010, (202) 726-0842
 - Hours: M-F, 7:30AM -2PM, \$15 (cash only)
- CVS Minute Clinics: According to the website TB testing is offered for \$27. There are two Minute Clinics in DC and a few others in close-in MD and VA. A few are listed below. You can find a full listing and pricing information at www.minuteclinic.com.
 - DC: CVS Minute Clinic, 845 Bladensburg Rd NE, Washington, DC, 20002 (<http://www.minuteclinic.com/DC/Metro/Northeast-DC.aspx>)
 - DC: CVS Minute Clinic, 320 40th St. NE, Washington, DC 20019 (<http://www.minuteclinic.com/DC/Metro/40th-Street-Northeast.aspx>)
 - MD: CVS Minute Clinic, 6700 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda, MD, 20815 (<http://www.minuteclinic.com/MD/Maryland-Beltway/Bradley.aspx>)
 - VA: CVS Minute Clinic, 3133 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA, 22201 (<http://www.minuteclinic.com/VA/Virginia-Suburbs/Spout-Run.aspx>)
- Unity Healthcare has 12 Health Centers in DC, some of which are near metro and many of which have evening hours. A few are listed below. For a full list, see: <http://www.unityhealthcare.org/HealthCenters.html>
 - East of the River (near Benning Road Metro)
 - Walker-Jones (near NY Ave–Gallaudet Metro)
 - Upper Cardozo (near Columbia Heights Metro)

Requesting a Child Protection Register (CPR) Check

- **Already have a clean CPR check in the past year?** Please provide OSSE with a copy of the letter by emailing it to surrogate.parent@dc.gov or faxing it to (202) 299-2135 to the attention of the Surrogate Parent Program. There is no need to get another one!
- Information about DC Child and Family Services Agency's (CFSA) Child Protection Register can be found at: <http://cfsa.dc.gov/DC/CFSA/CFSA+News+and+Opportunities/Background+Checks>
- Please fill out the **General CPR Check Application** linked from the CPR information page or at: cfsa.dc.gov/DC/CFSA/CFSA+News+and+Opportunities/CPR+Request+General+Application+PDF
 - Please skip section IVA and fill out section IVB. Leave Part V blank.
- Please bring your completed, notarized General CPR Check Application to the Educational Surrogate Parent training or mail it to: Surrogate Parent Program, OSSE Division of Special Education, 810 1st St. NE – 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20002.
- **Important Note: Once submitted, it can take up to 30 days for CFSA to provide OSSE with the results of the check. If you complete your application before your training date please consider mailing or dropping your form off in advance.**
- Need assistance finding a notary? The Children's Law Center, located at 616 H Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC, 20001, has offered its assistance with notarizing documents. Please contact Tonisha Erskine, 202-467-4900x 543 or terskine@childrenslawcenter.org to schedule a time.