

Back-to-School Education Rights for Families

As children head back to school, many families may have questions about evaluations, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), behavior, discipline, attendance, or what to do when a child is struggling. CCA's education advocacy team created a new Back-to-School Q&A to help Connecticut families better understand their rights and know what steps they can take when their child needs support – sneak peek below.

Q: Can the school keep asking me to pick up my child after a behavioral incident?

A school cannot use repeated informal pickups as a substitute for addressing a child's behavioral or disability-related needs. When a school requires a parent or guardian to pick up a child because of challenging behavior, that removal may be treated as an out-of-school suspension and must be documented appropriately. Families can ask the school to explain the reason for the removal in writing, document the exclusion, and consider whether the child may need additional supports, evaluations, or services.

Every child's situation is different, but families do not have to wait until a situation becomes a crisis to ask questions or request help.

Read the full Back-to-School Q&A: https://cca-ct.org/back-to-school-qa-what-connecticut-student-education-rights/?blm_aid=50658

**FIGHTING FOR THE LEGAL RIGHTS
OF CONNECTICUT'S MOST
VULNERABLE CHILDREN.**



Removing Cost Barriers to School Credit Recovery

When Bridgeport community organizations alerted CCA that high school students were being charged fees to participate in summer credit recovery programs, CCA contacted the district.

Credit recovery is essential for students who need to make up class credits and stay on track to graduate. But for students and families already facing financial hardship, program fees are a serious barrier, especially for justice-involved students, students with disabilities, and other young people who may already be navigating multiple challenges. CCA contacted Bridgeport Public Schools about this concern, and the district agreed to stop charging students fees to participate in its credit recovery program.

CCA has also heard that other public school districts in Connecticut may be charging hundreds of dollars for credit recovery programs. These costs deepen existing inequities and make it harder for students to remain connected to school and on a path toward graduation.

CCA is gathering information about these practices across the state and engaging in advocacy with school districts to help ensure cost is not a barrier to credit recovery.

For more information, contact Attorney Kathryn Meyer at kmeyer@cca-ct.org.





Pictured here: Speak Up! youth Selena, Josiah, and Gavin; Stella Rose, CCA Speak Up! Youth Advocacy Coordinator; Maggie Prendergast, CCA Director of Development; Mayor Arunan Arulampalam; Brian Gallagher, City of Hartford Parks and Recreation Director; Representatives of Friends of Sigourney Park; Hartford City Councilwoman Marilyn Rossetti; and others

Speak Up! Youth Celebrate Sigourney Square Park Basketball Court Restoration

On August 25, CCA's Speak Up! youth celebrated the official ribbon cutting for the restored basketball court at Sigourney Square Park in Hartford's Asylum Hill neighborhood with partners, CCA staff members, and Mayor Arunan Arulampalam. The project began when Speak Up! youth secured a \$25,000 Love Your Block grant from the Greater Hartford Gives Foundation to restore the court and help create a safer, more welcoming space for young people and families.

At the ribbon cutting, Speak Up! youth Selena, Josiah, and Gavin reflected on how they turned an idea into action: applying for funding, building community partnerships, and helping respond to high juvenile arrest rates and the need for more positive spaces for youth in Asylum Hill. Youth are working alongside Friends of Sigourney Square Park, Hartford City Councilwoman Marilyn Rossetti, the Hartford Department of Public Works, Knox Foundation, Our Piece of the Pie, the Hartford Police Department, Hartford's Racial and Ethnic Disparities team, and neighborhood residents to support park cleanups, community events, new improvements, and continued advocacy for the park's future.

As one youth shared: "This project is only the beginning."

Read the full press release: https://cca-ct.org/speak-up-youth-celebrate-opening-of-restored-basketball-court-at-sigourney-square-park/?blm_aid=50658

Want to support the work of the Center for Children's Advocacy?



**Help give children a voice
Donate Today!**

Recent Reporting Highlights Crisis for Immigrant Children in Connecticut

Recent reporting from CT Insider and Connecticut Public has brought urgent attention to immigrant children spending months in federal custody in Connecticut while parents and relatives wait to bring them home. The coverage documented prolonged family separation, sponsorship delays, interrupted education, and the legal advocacy that helped reunite children with their families. It has also raised broader concerns about children's access to legal representation and the need for stronger protections.

Through our Immigrant Children's Justice Project, CCA is responding with direct legal representation, federal litigation, pro bono partnerships, public education, and policy advocacy. Since late 2025, CCA and



Pictured: Sabrina Tavi, CCA Director & Senior Attorney, Immigrant Children's Justice Project, and Martha Stone, CCA Founder and Special Counsel, with Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro

attorneys from Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder have represented four children in federal cases challenging prolonged detention. Each child was released to family shortly after litigation began. CCA continues to call for faster family reunification, guaranteed legal representation, educational continuity, and post-release support for immigrant children.

Read the full update and recent coverage: https://cca-ct.org/immigrant-children-detained-in-connecticut/?blm_aid=50658

If you are interested in learning more about how you can help CCA in this area of our work, please contact Maggie Prendergast at mprendergast@cca-ct.org.



Ilana Ofgang, Staff Attorney and Manager of CCA's Educational Success Project; Janet Ortiz, CCA Parent Cabinet Coordinator and Bridgeport Office Manager; and Stacey Violante Cote, CCA Deputy Director, with participants during the first Parent Cabinet meeting

New Parent Cabinet Launches in Bridgeport

CCA's new Parent Cabinet brings Bridgeport area parents together to learn their legal rights, build practical advocacy skills, support one another, and help identify broader issues affecting children and families. Through monthly meetings and trainings with CCA staff and attorneys, parents are gaining tools to advocate more confidently in school meetings and other child-serving systems. At the same time, CCA is learning directly from parents' lived experiences and working in partnership with them to pursue systemic reforms to improve education for children in Bridgeport and across the state.

CCA is grateful to the Rotary Club of Bridgeport and the Westport Rotary Club for sponsoring the Parent Cabinet and helping make this work possible.

Parents interested in participating can contact Janet Ortiz at 203-335-0719, ext. 201.

Learn more about CCA's Parent Cabinet: https://cca-ct.org/parent-advocacy-in-connecticut-cca-launches-new-parent-cabinet/?blm_aid=50658

Updated Teen Legal Rights Resources

CCA recently updated four Teen Legal Rights brochures to help young people better understand their rights and where to turn for help. Each resource is designed to provide clear, accessible information for young people navigating complicated legal issues in school and family situations.

Download the brochures below.

Pregnant or Parenting: What are my rights in school?

https://cdn.cca-ct.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/06140136/CCA_pregnant_parenting_brochure_FINAL.pdf?blm_aid=50658

Pushout: Are you considering leaving school?

https://cdn.cca-ct.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/06140129/CCA_pushout_brochure_FINAL.pdf?blm_aid=50658

Missing School? It's a big deal – here's what the law says

https://cdn.cca-ct.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/06140131/CCA_missing_school_brochure_FINAL.pdf?blm_aid=50658

What is Emancipation? Is it a good option for me?

https://cdn.cca-ct.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/06140134/CCA_emancipation_brochure_FINAL.pdf?blm_aid=50658



Welcoming New Members to CCA's Board of Directors

Please join us in welcoming three outstanding leaders to the CCA Board of Directors: Pam Lucas, Claude Mayo, and Peter M. Dreyer.



Pam Lucas is a longtime supporter and admirer of CCA's work. She recently retired from Wizner Law, PLLC, an employment-based immigration law firm in Hartford, and continues

to support immigrant communities through pro bono work with TAILC, The American Immigrant Legal Clinic, on bond and habeas matters. Pam looks forward to assisting CCA's Immigrant Children's Justice Project with probate court filings and appearances for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status cases. She is a member of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and a past co-chair of the Chapter's State Advocacy Committee. Pam also serves as a Town Plan & Zoning Commissioner in Glastonbury and is a founding member of Glastonbury Friends of Housing.



Claude Mayo is Director of Belonging at Quinnipiac University and brings more than 20 years of experience in higher education, student affairs,

inclusive excellence, and social justice. His work has focused on building inclusive learning environments, supporting student success, and strengthening communities where young people feel seen, valued, and supported.



Peter M. Dreyer is Managing Partner and Trial Attorney at Silver Golub & Teitell LLP in Stamford. He brings nearly three decades of experience in

organizational leadership, complex litigation, public service, and professional-association governance. Peter represents individuals and families facing life-altering injury and loss. He also served as President of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and previously worked as an Assistant District Attorney in the Bronx, including service as the office's Family Court prosecutor and liaison for youth charged with serious felonies.

We are grateful to welcome Pam, Claude, and Peter to CCA's Board of Directors and look forward to the insight, leadership, and commitment they will bring to CCA's work.

CCA In Community

As children and families prepared for a new school year, CCA joined several community events to share resources, answer questions, and connect with families across Connecticut.

MIDDLETOWN:

Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut's (EFCT) Bright Futures Family Day



Right: Bonnie Roswig and Ilana Ofgang, Educational Success Project Staff Attorney

CCA participated in EFCT's Bright Futures Family Day on August 16, an event for families of children with epilepsy and the professionals who support them. Ilana Ofgang and Bonnie Roswig spoke with families about disability rights and accommodations and legal rights involved in the transition to college, Seizure Action Plans, Birth to Three transitions to school, outplacements for students with medical complexity, emergency medication administration, and back-to-school readiness. We were thrilled to join families, caregivers, school professionals, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, and other community partners for an afternoon of education, connection, children's activities, and practical back-to-school resources, including Know Your Rights materials, to help families prepare for a safe and successful school year.

CCA is grateful for the funding from the Elizabeth Swaim Middletown Fund, Edmund T. and Barbara S. Delaney Fund and Whelen Family Fund at the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, that supported CCA's services at Bright Futures.



Left: CCA's Bonnie Roswig, Director and Senior Attorney of CCA's Disability Rights Medical-Legal Partnership Project and Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut Executive Director James Hart

BRIDGEPORT:

Ready, Set, Learn Community Fair with the Center for Family Justice

On August 17, CCA joined the Ready, Set, Learn Community Fair in Bridgeport, organized by the Center for Family Justice. Mallory Sanchez, Ilana Ofgang, and Janet Ortiz attended to connect with children, youth, and families, share information about CCA's services, and support a community-wide effort to help students and families start the school year with the resources they need.



Ilana Ofgang, Staff Attorney and Manager of CCA's Educational Success Project; Mallory Sanchez, Staff Attorney with CCA's LGBTQ Youth Advocacy Project; CCA clients Jamie Torres and his mom Zelma Torres; and Janet Ortiz, CCA's Bridgeport Office Manager



HARTFORD:

South Marshall Street Back-to-School Block Party

CCA was proud to join the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association and Immanuel Congregational Church as a sponsor and participant in their 22nd annual South Marshall Street Back-to-School Block Party on August 20. Nieka Thompson, Director of CCA's Racial Justice Project; Josh Michtom, Director of CCA's Child Welfare Project; and Zoe Masters, Staff Attorney with CCA's School Justice Project were in community at CCA's table, sharing information with parents and caregivers while playing games and making crafts with the children and families. The event brought together dozens of nonprofit organizations to provide resources and support for families as students prepared to return to school.



Josh Michtom provides back-to-school legal information and activities to Hartford families

Stand With Children and Youth Across Connecticut



Children and youth should not have to fight alone to access the services, protections, and opportunities they are entitled to. With your partnership and support, CCA can continue advocating for even more children whose needs are being overlooked, whose rights are being denied, and whose futures depend on

systems being held accountable. **Join our community of advocates fighting for the rights of CT's low-income children today:**

https://secure.qgiv.com/for/centerforchildrensadvocacy/?blm_aid=46631