KNOW YOUR RIGHTS
Puerto Rican students with disabilities moving to Massachusetts

Your child should get the special education services they had in Puerto Rico as soon as they start school.
The services should be the same as the services your child had in Puerto Rico.

For example:
If your child was in a regular classroom in Puerto Rico, but/and had their own aide, the new school should give your child the same support.

Your child should be able to start school right away
An Individualized Education Program (IEP) tells schools the services your child needs.
The new school may test your child and write a new IEP. But they must let your child go to school while they are testing and making a new IEP.

Schools must not delay services just because parents are still in Puerto Rico and cannot sign the forms. Someone can act “in place of the parent” to make decisions and sign forms.

If you do not have your child’s IEP
Your child should still be able to start school right away.
The new school must try to get a copy of your child’s records from Puerto Rico.

If the new school cannot get a copy of your child’s IEP
The school must make a new IEP. They can ask you about the services your child had in Puerto Rico.

If you agree to the new IEP, your child can get services right away.

You may be able to get your child’s IEP faster than the school can. If you have family still in Puerto Rico, ask them to mail you a copy.

Your child may need counseling
Your child may feel “trauma” from
• the hurricane,
• the sudden move, and
• separation from friends and family.

Trauma can keep children from learning. It can also change their behavior.

If your child is suffering from trauma, the new school must include mental health services in your child’s IEP.
Your child may need help with learning in English

If English is not your child’s primary language, the new school must test your child’s English language skills.

They must compare them with your child’s Spanish language skills.

If your child speaks very little English, the new school must give some instruction in Spanish.

Your child’s IEP must include these language services.

You have the right to get all communication from your child’s school in your primary language

The school must use a qualified interpreter when they need to speak with you.

They must translate all the documents you need into your language.

The interpreter and information in your language must cost you nothing.

The school must give you this information at the same time they give other parents information in English.

The school must not ask you to sign a document in English if you do not understand it.

Use the card on MassLegalHelp to ask the school for help in your language MassLegalHelp.org/interpreter/how-to-get

For questions about your rights and your child’s rights to information in your own language

- See Masslegalhelp.org/language-rights,
- Call Massachusetts Law Reform Institute – 617-357-0700 x350

If you need help, contact one of the agencies below:

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<tr>
<th>Where the Agency Works</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern Massachusetts</td>
<td>Children’s Law Center</td>
<td>888-KIDLAW8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central and Western Massachusetts</td>
<td>Community Legal Aid</td>
<td>855-CLA-LEGAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern Massachusetts, Cape, and the Islands</td>
<td>Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts</td>
<td>800-244-9023</td>
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<tr>
<td>All of Massachusetts</td>
<td>Massachusetts Advocates for Children</td>
<td>617-357-8431</td>
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<tr>
<td>All of Massachusetts</td>
<td>Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee(students with mental disabilities)</td>
<td>800-342-9092</td>
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<tr>
<td>Framingham Area</td>
<td>MetroWest Legal Services</td>
<td>508-620-1830</td>
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This flyer was prepared by Massachusetts Advocates for Children on behalf of the Education Law Task Force subcommittee on Latinos and Special Education.