



# *Parent Responsibilities for Advocacy Services*

**Throughout this document, you will be asked to initial to confirm that you read and understand the information that is being presented. Please initial all of the appropriate places and submit this document with your packet in order to complete your client registration.**

## **MEETING ATTENDANCE AND DOCUMENT RETENTION:**

Please note that advocacy services or scheduling any school based or off-site appointments cannot be rendered without a signed Advocacy Contract submitted to the FHF offices and subject to the advocates availability. Contracts must be accompanied by a start-up packet and a packet review fee as defined in the Fee Schedule. All paperwork must be hard copies; for security and liability reasons we cannot accept any documents via email attachments or fax.

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Regarding in-office consultations, please be advised that you, as the parent, are expected to bring the accompanying documents to your consultation with the advocate and are also expected to take detailed notes on the recommendations made by the advocate during your meeting.

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## HOURS OF OPERATION:

- In most cases, our Office Staff will be available starting at 9:00am and ending at 2:00pm Monday-Friday (public school days only). During this time, clients may call for office matters such as scheduling, billing, and general questions and concerns.
- Due to staff limitations, all voice mail messages will be returned by an FHF staff member no later than three public school days from when the message was left.

***-For immediate issues, or simple yes no questions, it is recommended that clients email the office- [fhf@fhfnyc.org](mailto:fhf@fhfnyc.org).***

- PLEASE NOTE: Due to the high volume of phone calls and messages, parents are limited to leaving only one phone voice mail message per day and one email per day. Please do not email the advocates personal email. Please only use FHF's office email ([fhf@fhfnyc.org](mailto:fhf@fhfnyc.org))

-The advocates are usually in the field from 8:30am – 5:00pm and have limited phone availability during the business day.

***It is always the parent's responsibility to follow up the next business day after leaving a message.***

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## CONSULTATIONS:

- Clients will be seen by appointment only.
  - “Walk-In” appointments are NOT permitted.
  - Children are NOT permitted to attend meetings at the FHF office.**
  - Please alert the staff if you have any allergies/fears of dogs or cats.
    - Sometimes, meetings are held in the main part of the home, and specific arrangements need to be made in advance.
  - Please review fee schedule for costs and times for in-office and phone consultations. **ALL SERVICES MUST BE PAID IN ADVANCE**
- \*See Fee Schedule\*

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## APPOINTMENTS AND MEETINGS:

First and foremost, if you want an advocate to accompany you to your child's IEP meeting or any other school based meetings, do NOT accept the appointment date offered to you by the school without first checking the advocate's availability. **Please be aware that, in most cases, the advocate is booked at least 2 months in advance. Please be proactive and ask your school-based team to give you available meeting dates to choose from.** If you intend for the advocate to attend your child's annual review, please notify your child's teacher/provider **at least two months** before the IEP annual review date (listed in the upper right-hand corner of the IEP), requesting several meeting dates so that the office staff can check the advocates availability. Please request at LEAST three dates to better the chances of finding a mutually available date. You may also give permission to the school to contact our office directly to assist in scheduling a meeting. Please remember all meeting are scheduled to the advocates availability.

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## FEE POLICY:

Please see the document titled "Fee Schedule" prior to signing the contract in order to understand the cost of each service. **Payment is due in advance of service. Please note that an invoice will be sent upon booking your service and payment is due no later than 48 hours of receipt. This payment will serve as your confirmation. All school based / CSE / CPSE / EI meetings will be billed at a Level One meeting and the balance (if any) will be billed after the conclusion of the meeting.** A bounced check fee of \$35.00 will apply to all bounced checks. If a check bounces, all future payments must be made by cash, money order, credit card, or a certified teller's check. All checks and money orders must be made payable to "Families Helping Families" or "FHF."

*Sliding fees and/or fee waivers are available upon evidence of financial need (tax returns, federal assistance statements, etc.). Please note that there is a limit to the amount of pro-bono cases the FHF office can afford to accept, and therefore there is no guarantee that FHF will accept your case. Executive Board approval is required prior to FHF accepting any pro-bono cases. Board approval may require an in-person interview and/or home visit.*

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## OFF-SITE MEETING PROTOCOL:

The FHF advocate has severe physical and medical disabilities, which prevent her from walking even short distances. Her disability, compounded by the parking challenges in areas around school buildings, make it almost impossible for her to walk from her car to the meeting site. Because of this, part of your responsibility regarding her attendance at your meeting will be to provide her transportation from her parking spot to the front door of the

school. Transportation arrangements for the advocate must be made one week prior to your meeting date. If for some reason, you the client, cannot accommodate this a \$30.00 fee will be incurred to cover the costs of a staff member driving the advocate to and from your child's meeting.

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### **CANCELLATION POLICY:**

We ask that you notify FHF immediately if you need to reschedule an appointment. All fees are non-refundable, any change in appointments are subject to advocate availability.

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### **INFORMATION PACKET:**

Please note that all documents that you send to the FHF office must be PHOTOCOPIES ONLY (no original documents). Also note that all documents will be shredded within 3 months of receipt if you do not make follow-up contact. **It is your responsibility to call the advocate during the client call hours to discuss the next steps with your child's case. Please allow 2 business days for the office to process the packet. Do not expect an FHF staff member to call you.**

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### **SUGGESTED PACKET DOCUMENTS:**

- A cover letter stating your concerns.
- Copies of your child's IEPs for the last 2 years, including the most recent IEP.
- Copies of your child's last 2 years of report cards.
- If applicable, copies of all New York State testing scores and graphs, as available at school or on the mystudent.nyc website.
- Copy of your child's most recent evaluations.
- Copy of medical reports, including diagnosis.
- Copy of any other relevant information pertaining to your child's educational needs.

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**PACKET DELIVERY:**

Please mail or hand-deliver the packet directly to the FHF office address.  
When hand delivering: Place packet directly in the locked white mailbox (the pull-down handle faces the street). **Do NOT ring bell.** Do not call the office to notify staff of your packets delivery. When mailing packet: To ensure timely receipt, do NOT make delivery contingent upon a signature.

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**As the parent, you are your child's primary advocate and case manager. Please understand that you are contracting FHF to *co-advocate* with you for your child. You need to consider yourself a partner in the roles and responsibilities in obtaining your child's free and appropriate public education.**

Please sign here to confirm that you have read the information above and that you understand the roles of the advocate and the parent.

Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parents Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_