



Parent Responsibilities for Advocacy Services

Throughout this document you will be asked to initial in order to confirm that you have read and understood the terms. Please initial each section and submit this document with your child's educational packet, signed contract and contract fee to complete your client registration.

CLIENT STATUS

Please be advised that you will only be considered a "Client" for the current school year if you have submitted a signed contract with the Parent Responsibilities for Advocacy Services (initialed in all sections), your child's "Educational Packet" (see below), and a paid in full contract fee.

Initial Here: _____

Please be advised you are considered a "Client in Good Standing", if all sent invoices have been fully paid with no delay, a payment history absent of bounced or denied payments, and your consistent compliance to the Parent Responsibilities.

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Please be advised that the client contract is severed immediately once a parent *chooses* to attend any of their child's school-based meetings (not to include Parent/Teacher Conferences), without the FHF Advocate. This restriction does not include any circumstance in which the FHF Advocate is notified of said meeting and advises you to attend on your own. Please be advised that once your contract is severed you will be subject to a mandatory 45-minute consultation with the Advocate prior to being accepted back as a client, and the paying of and entering into a new contract. Exceptions to this rule are determined by the Advocate and Executive Board on a case by case basis. This rule is intended to prevent complications with your child's case and to keep FHF informed and involved with all aspects of their education. FHF reserves the right not to take back clients who do not abide by these or any other FHF rules.

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REQUIRED DOCUMENTS; YOUR CHILD'S "EDUCATIONAL PACKET"

Please be advised that if you are becoming a client of FHF, you must provide the Advocate with your child's Educational Packet at the time you are submitting your signed contract and the fully initialed Parent Responsibilities form. This packet consists of the following documents:

- A cover letter giving insight and opinion into your child's needs and your thoughts on what services, programs, accommodations and/or modification he/she needs;
- Copies of ALL IEPs or IESPs developed for your child in the last two school years including the most recent one;
- Copies of the most recent evaluations conducted on your child in all modalities;
- Copies of ALL report cards and IEP Goal Progress reports for the last two school years;
- If applicable, copies of all New York State testing scores and graphs, as available at school or on the mystudent.nyc website.
- Correspondences with the school or CSE regarding your child's needs, education or behavior, including but not limited to behavior charts, incident reports, suspension records;
- Medical reports relevant to your child's school-based needs, including all reports that include a diagnosis of your child.
- Copies of any relevant information pertaining to your child's educational needs.

All documents and paperwork submitted to FHF must be in hard copy form; for security and liability reasons we cannot accept any documents via email attachments or fax. Please do not send us original documents. Please provide us with photocopies only.

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PACKET DELIVERY:

Please mail or hand-deliver the packet directly to the FHF office address (at 112 Petrus Avenue, Staten Island New York, 10312.).

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 packet delivery. When mailing packet: To ensure timely receipt, do NOT make delivery contingent upon a signature.

Please follow the new safety protocol put in effect due to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- *Each page of the document needs to be placed in an individual clear sheet protector or a gallon sized zip-lock bag.*
- *If the page is double sided place only one page in the page protector / zip-lock bag.*
- *If pages are single sided, you may put two pages back to back in each baggie / page protector so that the written side of both pages are clearly visible from the outside of the baggie / page protector.*

- *Each page needs to be in the proper position and format (unfolded and flat), so that it can be read while in the protective covering.*
- *ONCE DROPPED OFF - Please email the FHF office at FHF@FHFnyc.org*

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SCHEDULING MEETING AND “HOLDING” DATES

Please note that the “holding” of dates or the scheduling of any school-based, or off-site appointment are all made subject to the Advocate’s availability and ***are a privilege only afforded to “Clients in Good Standing”*** (please see above). Please be advised that depending on scheduling needs, “Holds” on dates will be canceled if they are not confirmed within 48 hours of the hold. Also note that depending on scheduling needs, scheduled appointments will also be canceled if the invoice for that appointment is not paid within 48 hours.

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Please be advised that due to the current restrictions caused by the COVID-19 crisis, the Advocate will need to participate in your child’s meeting and for any consultation, through virtual methods. These restrictions are state and city mandates and are not subject to debate or discussion.

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Prior to the FHF Advocate participating in your child’s meeting a mandatory discussion must take place. If you are a new client, or if you are a returning client but did not use the FHF Advocate at your child’s last IEP, IESP or other school-based meeting, the discussion will take place during the mandatory 45-minute consultation required of all new clients (see fee schedule). If you are a returning client and have used the FHF Advocate at your child’s last school-based meeting, this discussion will take place through the mandatory 15-minute consult required for all contract renewals (see fee schedule).

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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 all meetings. Parents’ are highly encouraged to audio record this meeting but they must first notify the advocate of this.

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The FHF Advocate is not responsible to remember all aspects of your child’s school-based meeting. It is your responsibility as the parent to review the IEP/IESP developed from the meeting to ensure that it is reflective of what was discussed and agreed upon during the meeting. It is for this reason that ALL CLIENTS ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO AUDIO RECORD ALL SCHOOL-BASED MEETINGS. This is done by informing the school and/or CSE in writing of your intent to audio record the meeting at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. FHF

advises that you send the “Intent to record” letter via email and as soon as possible, preferably the same day the meeting date is confirmed. Please be advised that you are responsible to notify the school or CSE of your intent to record, and you are responsible for providing the recorder.

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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 and remote working, all email and 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.

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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 only one email per day. Please do not email the advocate’s personal email or call or text the advocate’s personal cell or home phone. Please only use FHF’s office email (fhf@fhfnyc.org) and office phone number (718-227-2171) to contact us. **Failure to comply with these restrictions can lead to termination of your contract with FHF.**

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-Please note The Advocate is usually in the field from 7:00am – 5:00pm and has limited phone availability during the business day. ***It is the parent’s responsibility to follow up the next business day after leaving a message.***

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FEE POLICY:

In order to understand the cost of each service, please see the document titled “Fee Schedule” and review it thoroughly prior to signing the contract. **Payment is due in advance of ALL services. All school-based meetings are booked and initially billed at a one hour minimum. These meetings will be billed at an hourly rate for the first hour. If the meeting runs over the hour allotted a subsequent invoice will be sent to you for the additional time spent in the meeting (please see Fee Schedule). Please note that an invoice will be sent to you upon scheduling this meeting. All invoices are due immediately upon receipt. Your payment is what secures the date your meeting is scheduled for. If payment is not received in a timely manner, depending on need, your appointment might be canceled. If your school-based meeting runs longer than the one hour minimum (Level One, see fee schedule), a subsequent invoice will be sent to you for the remaining balance. Payment is due upon receipt of this and any other invoice. It is imperative that you are aware**

that your appointment can be cancelled and your appointment relinquished if your payment is not received within the 48 hours and if that date and time is needed for another client. Your timely payment serves as confirmation of your appointment. A “Fee Cancellation” charge of \$35.00 will apply to all bounced checks or canceled payments. A \$50 cancellation fee will apply for any meeting cancellation if you give less than one full **business days’** notice (no less than 24 hours) to FHF. If a check bounces or the fee is canceled, all future payments must be made in cash, money order, or a certified teller’s check. All checks and money orders must be made payable to “Families Helping Families” or “FHF.”

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Sliding fees and/or fee waivers are available on a limited basis and only upon submission of evidence demonstrating financial need (tax returns, federal assistance statements, etc.). FHF follows the Federal Income Guideline standards to determine which families qualify for free or reduced rate services. Please note that there is a limit to the amount of pro-bono cases the FHF office can 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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ALL SERVICES MUST BE PAID IN ADVANCE OF SERVICE AND UPON IMMEDIATE RECEIPT OF THE INVOICE. CLIENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY “OVERAGE” CHARGES IF MEETINGS LAST LONGER THAN ORIGINALLY BILLED FOR

See Fee Schedule

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APPOINTMENTS AND MEETINGS:

YOU MUST NOT accept ANY appointment date offered to you by the school if you want the advocate to attend. You must **FIRST** check with the FHF office to confirm the advocate's availability before accepting any meeting date. *****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 and times to choose from.*** If you want the advocate to attend your child's annual review, please notify your child's teacher/provider **at least three months** before the stated annual review date (listed in the upper right-hand corner of the IEP), requesting **AT LEAST THREE DATES** to offer to the Advocate to better your chances of identifying a mutually available date. You may also give permission to the school to contact our office directly to assist in scheduling a meeting. **ALL** meetings are scheduled to the advocates availability.

Initial Here:_____

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CONSULTATIONS:

- Clients will be seen by appointment only, **NO WALK-INS** or **DROP-BYS**.
- Clients are responsible to take all notes regarding all aspects of this meeting including but not limited to any recommendations and or follow up instructions given to you by the advocate.
- “Walk-In” appointments are NOT permitted.
- Non-clients may schedule phone consultations.
- Children are NOT permitted in the FHF office for ANY REASON.**
- Please alert the staff if you have any allergies or fears of dogs or cats.
- Please review fee schedule for costs for consultations.
- Please be prompt with your scheduled appointment start time. Your meeting will end according to the time slot it was scheduled for, not according to the time you arrived/called.
- Parents’ are highly encouraged to audio record this meeting, but they must first notify the advocate of this.
- _Parents are highly advised to have paper and pencil for note taking during this discussion.
- All fees are non-refundable. Depending on the circumstances a credit for the fee might be applied to your account to be used for that specific schoolyear. Credits to accounts will be determined on a case to case basis by the Advocate and Executive Board.

Initial Here: _____

OFF-SITE MEETING PROTOCOL:

If the Advocate agrees to and the DOE permits her to attend an off-site meeting with you, the following accommodations must be provided for her due to her severely limiting physical and medical disabilities. The Advocate is not physically able to walk more than 80 feet, she cannot do stairs and requires a ramped entrance, an elevator or a first-floor meeting room. This disability compounded by the parking challenges in areas around school buildings present a significant challenge for her. Therefore, it is your responsibility to provide her with transportation to and from her parking spot to the handicapped entrance of the school. You must also notify the school in advance that the advocate requires a handicapped accessible entrance, and if the building does not have an elevator you must request a ground level meeting room. Often, school’s permit the Advocate to park in the teacher’s parking lot or on campus in an out of the way spot, please inquire if this accommodation is possible. Transportation arrangements for the advocate must be solidified when booking the meeting with the FHF office, you must confirm these accommodations with the FHF staff, one week prior to your meeting date. If parking is not available on the school compass and for some reason, you cannot accommodate the picking up and dropping off the advocate to and from her parking spot, a fee (see Fee Schedule) 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 if the meeting is canceled. Any change in appointment dates and times are subject to advocate availability. A fee paid for one date can be transferred to another date in the same school year **if** you have given timely notice (at least one full business days' notice), **if** you are a client in good standing, **and if** the advocate is available on the proposed alternate date and time.

Initial Here: _____

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 have a fully executed current school year contract and fully initialed parent responsibilities form on file. **It is your responsibility to call during business hours to ensure that your documents were received. Please allow 2 business days for the office to process the packet. Do not expect an FHF staff member to call you to confirm receipt of your child's documents.**

Initial Here: _____

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 and initial the 7 pages of this document, "Parent Responsibilities for Advocacy Services", completely and that you understand the roles of the advocate and yourself, the parent.

Childs Name: _____

Parents Name: _____

Parents Signature: _____

Date: _____