

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE AT WILL

July 2019

LATEST LEGAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON SCHOOL ENROLLMENT ISSUES AND RELATED MATTERS

EDISON— Details and advice about the rights of children, from five to 20 years of age — even those who may be homeless or undocumented immigrants — to register for schools in New Jersey are spelled out in the latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ).

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” is accessible online at www.lsnjlaw.org and also is available at all Legal Services offices in New Jersey.

Regarding school enrollment, the latest issue explains that in most cases a school district cannot deny admission to students because of their immigration status and, in fact, cannot ask for proof of immigration status as a condition for enrollment. There are strict rules governing when school districts can deny admission, and such decisions may be appealed.

In addition to federal law, New Jersey has rules designed to ensure that homeless students in public and charter schools have the same right to a free public education as any other student. These rules cover those in temporary or transitional housing and those living in shelters or mobile homes. All schools must have a person assigned to help homeless students and their families in dealing with enrollment, educational and transportation services and other needs.

Additionally, the newsletter deals with situations when a school’s code of conduct may be violated, leading to short-term or long-term suspensions or expulsions. Schools are not

allowed to suspend or expel students in preschool through second grade. Within five days of an out-of-school suspension, a student must be provided at least 10 hours of home instruction.

The newsletter also advises what steps parents should take if they believe their child needs special education. Additionally, it notes low-income children generally can qualify for school breakfast, lunch, and snack programs.

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of five independent non-profit corporations and has been providing free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people through offices in all 21 counties for more than 50 years. Since its inception, LSNJ has provided representation in more than 2.4 million cases.

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