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**FOR RELEASE AT WILL**

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**LEGAL SERVICES OF NEW JERSEY NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON KEY  
ENROLLMENT AND RELATED RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN THE  
NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

EDISON — The latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) centers on crucial rights and issues for students and parents in the new school year, including protection for immigrant and homeless children.

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” may be viewed online at [www.lsnjlaw.org](http://www.lsnjlaw.org).

Included in the publication is a detailed article about registering for school and links to articles about other school topics such as free and reduced-cost school lunch, school discipline, and individualized education programs available on the website.

Additionally, there is a separate newsletter article on protections for Section 8 federal housing voucher recipients.

Except for some limited circumstances, any child between the ages of 5 and 20 and living in New Jersey has a right to a free public education. That includes children who do not have legal immigration status, runaways and other homeless children, or those from families who cannot provide written leases or show that their dwelling complies with housing laws.

Further, it is specified that as a condition for enrollment, school officials cannot ask for proof of immigrant status and are forbidden from threatening to contact federal authorities about citizenship or immigration status. Additional safeguards bar schools from asking for Social Security numbers, income tax returns, passports, Green Cards, or other such related information.

Further information is available by contacting LSNJ's Education Representation Project through the LSNJLAW Hotline, online at [www.lsnjlawhotline.org](http://www.lsnjlawhotline.org), or by calling 1-888-576-5529.

Here are some of the many other school-related points highlighted in the newsletter:

- Students in charter schools are protected by the same rules as students in public schools.
- When students are registering, schools initially cannot require a copy of a lease or photo driver's license as proof of residence.
- With limited exceptions, students cannot be suspended until they are in third grade, and schools in the interim must provide continuing educational services for any student given an out-of-school suspension.
- Parents who believe their child should be in an "Individualized Education Program" or IEP because of behavioral or other learning issues can seek a special evaluation from the school.
- There is a detailed appeals process for disagreement with school decisions.

*Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of six independent nonprofit corporations that provides free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people in all 21 counties.*

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