

**ISSUE:** The school contacted me about a behavior issue with my child AND/OR my child's discipline case has been referred to Municipal Court and/or Families in Need of Services (FINS).



**FFLIC**

**Has your school frequently contacted you about a behavior issue?**



**Yes**

If your school is frequently contacting you about a behavior issue, could this be, or is it, an issue related to the child being gifted, having a disability, or a mental health challenge?

**Yes**

Does your child have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan?

**Maybe. I'm not sure.**

Ask for a meeting with the teacher. Ask questions about the child's behavior, abilities, and performance. If you suspect that the child needs special education services, ask the teacher to refer the child to a School Building Level Committee. Read the Advocacy Center's "Education Rights of Children with Disabilities in Louisiana: A Guide for Parents."

**No, definitely not.**

Do a Whole-Child Check-In. Ask: what might be done to improve my child's well-being? What remedies can you begin to put into place?



**No**

This is the first time. Or even if it's been more than once, it is NOT frequent and it is NOT a pattern of the same behavior. For school referrals to FINS or Municipal Court, there must be a pattern of behavior. The child must have "willfully and repeatedly" violated school rules, (LA Ch Code 730.1). A single incident is not enough. So this may be one way to challenge the referral, or if you have not received notice of previous issues. You will however still need to address the discipline issue. See FFLIC's guidance, "I learned my child will be suspended or expelled."

**No**

See the response for "Maybe. I'm not sure," if the behavior is related to an issue related to the child being gifted, having a disability, or a mental health challenge?

**Yes**

See Section 4 of the Advocacy Center's "Education Rights of Children with Disabilities in Louisiana: A Guide for Parents."



**If there has been a referral to FINS and/or Municipal Court...**

Schools can refer to either or both, and they vary in their practices, but there is guidance/recommendations regarding which one a school should refer to.

**Municipal Court**

These are often students in grades PK-8. The focus is the parent's behavior. Example: A child is falling asleep in class because parent's behavior is disrupting the child's sleep.

**FINS**

These are often students in grades 9-12. The student's behavior is the focus. Examples: Multiple fights, disrupting the class. If the school believes the behavior of the child is directly related to the behavior of the parent, a school may also refer to Municipal court, where the parent's behavior is the focus.

**A Whole Child Check-In.**

See the Whole-Child Check-In. What might be done to improve your child's well being? What remedies can you begin to put into place? Making these efforts will be helpful for your case. Provide documentation of what you are doing to change the situation.

**Prepare for your meeting/hearing with FINS/Court.**

Talk to an advocate and/or lawyer. Gather additional supporting information of your child's positive impact on the community. Examples: Letters from a counselor, favorite teacher, coach, or pastor, list of child's activities, as well as positive letters about your parenting efforts (boss, counselor, teacher, or pastor). If your child has a disability or mental health challenge, bring copies of the IEP or 504 Plan to every hearing date. If your child is in the process of a special education referral, let the court/FINS know. Bring a copy of your request to the school to refer the child to a School Building Level Committee.



**Need help advocating for your child? Call FFLIC 504.708.8376.**

