Guide to Legislative and Public Policy Websites
for Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs/Disabilities

http://www.supportforfamilies.org/legislative/laws.html

Laws Affecting Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs/Disabilities

There are many laws that have an impact on the quality of life for children with special health care needs/disabilities. This page contains a partial listing of major federal and state laws that govern the delivery of services to children with disabilities. The links below will lead you to information about the legislation or to the text of the legislation itself.

★ADA★ / ★IDEA★ / ★No Child Left Behind★ / ★Section 504★ / ★Lanterman Act★ / ★Hughes Bill★ / ★AB 3632★ / ★Perkins Vocational★

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

ADA Home Page
http://www.ada.gov

The Americans with Disabilities Act protects the rights of individuals with disabilities. It is the major civil rights law that protects citizens with disabilities. This is their home page. The link to their publications page provides a lot of information about ADA and disability law.

Guide to Disability Rights Laws
http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm

This site presents the Department of Justice's guide to disability rights laws. It does not include all of the laws that affect children with disabilities, but it's good if you would like to familiarize yourself with the laws in general.


This Eric digest provides a side-by-side comparison chart of these three laws. Eric is a clearinghouse on information about education for children with special health care needs/disabilities.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

California Department of Education (CDE)--Special Education Division--
Special Ed Laws and Regulations
http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/lr/ideareathztn.asp

This site provides information about how IDEA 2004 affects California Education law.

IDEA 2004 -- The Law

This is the US Department of Education-Office of Special Education & Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) webpage.

IDEA Partnership
http://www.ideapartnership.org/

IDEA Partnership has posted helpful summaries created by OSEP, that feature the statutory changes implemented by IDEA 2004.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

This new legislation will have an impact on children with disabilities. Try these sites to get an idea of some of the issues. The first is from the US Department of Education; the second from the California Department of Education (CDE); the third is a side-by-side comparison of NCLB and its implications for special education produced by the Council of Exceptional Children, and the last is a list of resources for families interested in NCLB from Reed Martin, a special education attorney and advocate.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Policy Documents Affecting the Education of Infants, Toddlers, Children and Youth with Disabilities

CDE Local Education Agency Plan
http://www.cde.ca.gov/

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Implications for Special Education Policy and Practice

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act
http://www.ed.gov/

You can link to the text of the Rehabilitation Act on this site, sponsored by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration.
Lanterman Act

The Lanterman Act is the law that protects the rights of people with developmental disabilities in California to services and supports that will allow them to live as independently as possible.

**The Act**

A link to the text of the Lanterman Act.

**Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Consumer's Guide to the Lanterman Act**

This guide is designed for consumers of DDS services. It is very simply and clearly written and provides good basic information about the Lanterman Act.

**Rights Under the Lanterman Act**
[http://www.pai-ca.org/](http://www.pai-ca.org/)

This is a Disability Rights California (formerly Protection and Advocacy (PAI)) publication and is a comprehensive guide to the Lanterman Act. You may also want to visit their site to see what other resources and publications they offer.

The Hughes Bill

The Hughes Bill is meant to ensure that special education students have the right to positive behavioral intervention plans.

**Hughes Bill**
[http://www.csusm.edu/thousand/501hughesbill.html](http://www.csusm.edu/thousand/501hughesbill.html)

Questions and answers about the Hughes Bill, adapted from Chapter 8 of the Protection and Advocacy (PAI) and Community Alliance for Special Education (CASE) manual, *Special Education Rights and Responsibilities*, revised 1997.

**Parent Handbook for Special Education (West Contra Costa Unified School District)**
[http://www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/](http://www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/)

This handbook does not deal only with the Hughes Bill, but it gives some background, and discusses other special education issues, too. It was produced by the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education of the West Contra Costa Unified School District. Information on the Hughes Bill begins on page 24 of the handbook.
Disability Rights California (formerly Protection and Advocacy)  
Information Letter on Behavior Intervention in School Settings  
http://www.pai-ca.org/

This Information Letter describes behavior intervention plans and practices in California schools and as such is an outcome of the Hughes Bill.

**AB 3632**

Bill AB 3632 -- The Interagency Responsibility for Related Services California Assembly Bill -- requires that local education agencies (LEA) arrange with other agencies to provide related services for special education students. These services can include education services to students in hospitals/developmental centers, occupational or physical therapy and mental health assessments and services.

**United Advocates for Children of California (UACC)**  
http://www.uacc4families.org/

UACC is a family organization working on behalf of children and youth with serious emotional disturbances and their families. They provide facts sheets about AB 3632. If mental health issues are of concern to you, it might be worth the time to start with their home page and browse the entire site.

**Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act**

**Carl Perkins Voication and Technical Education of 1998**  
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/CTE/legis.html

This page is featured of the US Department of Education site, provides background information at the Perkins Act and a link to the a summary or the legislation itself.
Links to Action

There are many organizations that track legislative actions and monitor public policy. Some are focused on laws that affect individuals with a specific disability; others are concerned with a wide range of policy issues. Some concentrate on federal issues; some on state; some on both. The websites of these organizations are set up to assist individuals interested in participating in the process.

The site is divided into major categories, and the internet resources within each category are listed alphabetically. You may find that some sites are listed in two places, as they may apply to both categories. The major categories are listed below. Clicking on any of the links will take you to the appropriate section.

- ★All Disabilities★
- ★Developmental Disabilities★
- ★Special Education★
- ★Health★
- ★Mental Health★
- ★California Legislation★
- ★San Francisco★

Legislation Affecting All Disabilities

American Association of People with Disabilities
http://www.aapd-dc.org/

It is worth the time to check out the Take Action links on this website.

Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) - Current Legislation
http://capwiz.com/aauap/issues/bills/

This site is an excellent starting place for involving yourself in disability legislation action. The Current Legislation page lists important federal legislation under consideration in the Senate and the House of Representatives. AUCD indicates whether or not they support or oppose the legislation. It is nicely organized by subject area (Budget & Appropriations, Child Abuse, Education, etc.) By clicking on any of the Bill Name links, you will be brought to a site where you can send a pre-written letter (or compose on of your own) on important legislative issues.

AT Network
http://www.atnet.org/

This site tracks legislation, federal and state, that addresses assistive technology.

AUCD Legislative News In Brief
http://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=164

AUCD produces a weekly legislative summary and update called Legislative News In Brief, as well as an archive of past issues. It nicely summarizes current legislative action in plain language and directs the reader toward possible action to take.
Congress.org
http://congress.org/congressorg/home/

Congress.org is a service of Capitol Advantage, a private, non-partisan company that specializes in facilitating civic participation. As such, it features a wide range of views. It is an excellent place to track federal legislation, write to your elected representatives and keep updated on legislation that affects families of children with disabilities. From the home page, you can select an Issue Area, including one on disabilities, that will feature information about all current legislation in that area. (The alerts included here are sponsored by various organizations, not Congress.org.) This is a good resource for familiarizing yourself with a broad range of issues and well worth a visit.

The DRM WebWatcher Advocacy
http://www.disabilityresources.org/ADVOCACY.html

Another good site of links to advocacy information websites.

Family Voices
http://www.familyvoices.org

Family Voices is a national, grassroots clearinghouse for information and education concerning the health care of children with special health needs. Its Public Policy page provides links to information about federal laws and related legislation and court cases.

Justice For All
http://www.jfanow.org/

Justice for All (JAF) was formed to defend and advance disability rights. Their Action Alerts provide timely information about action on all kinds of legislation that affect individuals with disabilities. You can click on Past Alerts Archive or join their mailing list to view the Alerts. This site can keep you up-to-date. Adult issues are also included.

National Coalition of Parent Centers
http://www.nationalparentcenters.org/index.htm

The National Coalition of Parent Centers is comprised of Parent Training and Information Centers (PTI's) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRC's) from throughout the country. Their website features updates on IDEA legislation, particularly the reauthorization going on right now, as well as on other issues affecting children with disabilities and their families. Please Note: The National Coalition of Parent Centers website is funded with private funds.

SSA's Information Site

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides a site for the public to read about Social Security issues. There are links that lead you to rules, legislation and public comment areas.
Developmental Disabilities Issues

**The Arc Legislative Action Center**

This site is an excellent place to begin looking at legislative issues affecting families of children with disabilities. The site will allow you to view current legislation; The Arc will indicate if it supports or opposes the legislation; there are links to locate your elected officials and write to them about current issues. The Arc is an organization which focuses on individuals with developmental disabilities.

**ArcLink California**

The ArcLink California provides legislative and public policy updates on the state level.

**California Disability Community Action Network (CDCAN)**
[http://www.cdcan.us/](http://www.cdcan.us/)

CDCAN provides extensive analysis of legislative and budget issues affecting Californians with developmental disabilities. You can sign up to receive updates by email, or you can view them on the website.

**National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) Advocacy page**

The NDSS advocacy section of its website targets legislation that affects individuals with Down syndrome. There are prepared letters that parents/families can send to their representatives letting them know how the legislation affects their children with Down syndrome.

**Protection and Advocacy**
[http://www.pai-ca.org/](http://www.pai-ca.org/)

Protection and Advocacy Inc. (PAI) is a non-profit agency working in partnership with individuals with disabilities, to protect, advocate and advance their Human, legal and service rights. Their website can connect you to information and advocacy resources. They also have many helpful publications.

**United Cerebral Palsy Advocacy and Public Policy**
[http://www.ucp.org/ucp_general.cfm/1/8](http://www.ucp.org/ucp_general.cfm/1/8)

UCP's Advocacy and Public Policy page is an excellent resource for monitoring federal legislation that affects individuals with developmental disabilities. It is a good place to start to familiarize yourself with the issues, and from this site you can find out about your legislators (federal, state and local). You may also have the opportunity to send a letter or an email directly to those who are making decisions on this laws. There are hints on writing or contacting your elected representatives, too.
Special Education Laws

California Association of Family Empowerment Centers' Family Participation Fund
http://cafec.org/family-participation-fund/

CAFEC, the California Association of Family Empowerment Centers, provides information and applications for families interested in voicing their opinions about education policy. You can learn about the fund and download application forms on this page.

California Department of Education (CDE) -- Special Education Resources
http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/selinks.asp

This site provides links to sites that provide information about both state and federal special education laws and the regulations that put the intent of the law into action.

California Department of Education (CDE) -- State and Federal Legislative Updates
http://www.cde.ca.gov/

This CDE page provides news about recently introduced legislation, links to sites that provide information about federal and state disability law, and updates of bills that have been introduced in the California Legislature and in Congress.

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) Legislative Action Center
http://capwiz.com/ld/home/

NCLD’s Action Center site is a good place to check on current and ongoing legislation that affects children with learning disabilities and special education services. You can communicate directly with your representatives through their Action Alert links. NCLD also produces an excellent on-line LD Advocates Guide which provides background information on special education law and helpful strategies for advocacy success. The Guide includes a glossary.

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) IDEA Reauthorization News
http://www.nichcy.org/

NICHCY is well known for its fine publications. It provides an excellent, informative site on the reauthorization of IDEA, which is very well worth visiting.
Health

Families USA
http://www.familiesusa.org/

Families USA is a national nonprofit, non-partisan organization dedicated to the achievement of high-quality, affordable health and long-term care for all Americans. They have a lot of good information about Medicaid. You can subscribe to their Action Center and receive updates on public policy issues by email.

Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
http://www.kff.org/docs/links/disabled.html

This site features links to sites that are focused on health-related issues. They have just released a guide on Medicaid, *Navigating Medicare and Medicaid, 2005: A Resource Guide for People with Disabilities, Their Families, and Their Advocates*.

National Health Law Program
http://www.healthlaw.org/

The National Health Law Program is a national public interest law firm that seeks to improve health care for America's working and unemployed poor, minorities, the elderly and people with disabilities. Their site is full of information about health-related legislation, with links to their publications, other organization's publication, websites, advocacy information and more. You can subscribe to receive updates to their sites and to receive their Washington update newsletter, *The Capital Communique*.

Mental Health

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law Action Alerts Page
http://www.bazelon.org/

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law has been providing legal advocacy for individuals with mental disabilities since 1972. To remain current on issues that Bazelon feels need actions, visit this part of their website. If you scroll to the bottom, you will find instructions on how to subscribe to their Action Alerts on a regular basis.

Mental Health Association in California (MHAC)
http://www.mhac.org/

MHAC provides advocacy, education, information and other services to ensure that all people who require mental health services receive the services that they need. MHAC's website for information about and updates on issues affecting mental health in California. They have a special Legislative Advocacy Resource area.
National Alliance of the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Santa Cruz  
http://www.namiscc.org/Advocacy/index.htm

This site is a good resource for keeping up to date on California legislative issues that affect individuals with mental illness.

United Advocates for Children of California (UACC)  
http://www.uacc4families.org/

UACC is a nonprofit advocacy organization which works on behalf of children and youth with serious emotional disturbances and their families. UACC is a family organization; the majority of our board and staff are parents of youth who have received services for mental health. The site provides fact sheets and talking points for a variety of mental health issues.

California Legislation

ArcLink California  
http://www.thearclink.org/state/index.asp?ID=CA

The ArcLink California provides legislative and public policy updates on the state level.

California Budget Project  
http://www.cbp.org/

The California Budget Project (CBP) provides policy makers with testimony, written reports and briefing materials which focus on how the California budget affects low and middle-income Californians. Their online reports can make for interesting reading, and their Publications page is very comprehensive.

California Budget site  
http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/BUD_DOCS/Bud-link.htm

The State of California Department of Finance website provides information and reports on the Governor's budgets, proposed and enacted, past and future.

Guide for Accessing California Legislative Information on the Internet  
http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/guide.html

This guide is available on the Official California Legislative Information site and was prepared by the Legislative Counsel of California. It includes a very helpful glossary of terms.

Legislative Analyst's Office  
http://www.lao.ca.gov/

This important site features commentary of state legislation by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO). The LAO provides "fiscal and policy advice" to the state Legislature, and is overseen by the bi-partisan Joint Legislative Budget Committee. It's good to see what they are proposing to the Legislature. It may take some patience to sift through the sometimes lengthy analyses.
National Alliance of the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Santa Cruz
http://www.namiscc.org/Advocacy/index.htm

This site is a good resource for keeping up to date on California legislative issues that affect individuals with mental illness.

Official California Legislative Information
http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/

If you are interested in following particular California bills, this site provides the opportunity to look up information about a particular piece of California Legislature using Bill Information. You can even subscribe to updates about a particular bill. From the home page, click on Bill Information, fill in the bill number (or search for it by author or keyword). Once you've located the particular bill's page, you can click on Subscribe and emails about action on this bill will be sent to you.

You can also learn about California law, gain access to information about state legislators, and view legislative publications on this site.