

Fighting for Education Rights Today and for the Future 🍏



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Education Rights: Today and for the Future

Nathan* entered foster care when he was abandoned at a hospital. Since entering the custody of the Department of Social Services, he has endured more than 20 changes to his living arrangements. Throughout these transitions, Nathan's Child and Family Team (CFT) made repeated requests for him to be evaluated for special education services. None of the school districts he entered began, or completed, the evaluation process.

During this period, Nathan was hospitalized multiple times due to his mental health. While hospitalized, Nathan received no education. In Fall of 2022, Nathan was hospitalized once again with one significant difference- his CFT reached out to our Education Navigation service for help.

Education Navigation provided real-time support for Nathan, helping his CFT understand the full scope of his educational rights and what steps they needed to take to meaningfully access them.

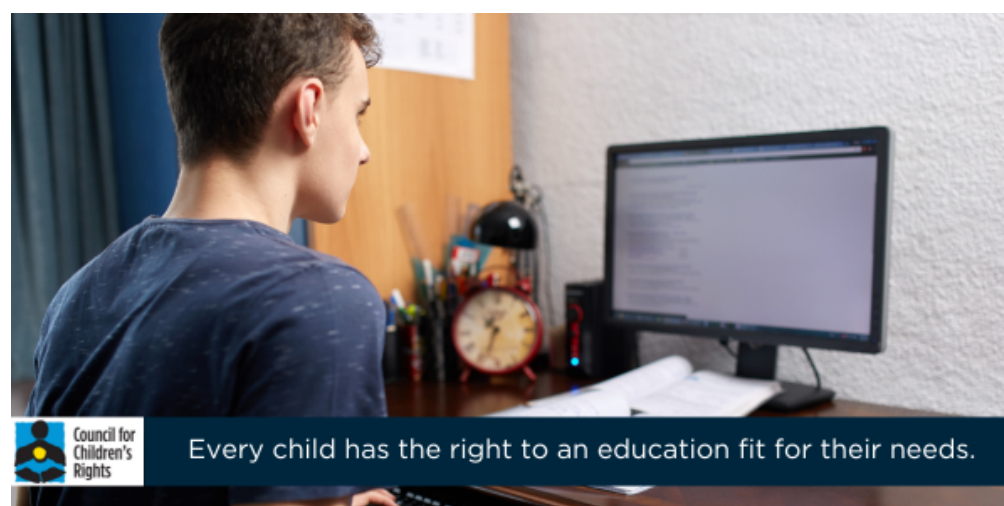
When the school still failed to honor Nathan's rights, Education Navigation encouraged the CFT to pursue a disability discrimination complaint through the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and provided them with the knowledge to complete this process.

As a result of this complaint, in November 2023, the school district agreed to provide Nathan with additional one-to-one instruction designed to compensate him for the lack of education received during his hospitalization. Furthermore, the school district agreed to provide district-wide training for all teachers and administrators on the education rights of students with disabilities during periods of hospitalization.

While Nathan should have never been denied access to his education, Council's Education Navigation service helped both he and his CFT to understand his rights. This allowed Nathan the opportunity to receive a proper education fit for his needs.

Additionally, the district-wide training will ensure the impact of this work goes beyond a single student. Going forward, students like Nathan in that school district are less likely to be forced to manage complex mental health needs at the expense of their education.

**Name has been changed to protect client confidentiality.*



To learn more about our Education Navigation service,
visit our website by [clicking here!](#)

Donate to Council

Now's Your Chance: Spring Into Action!



Spring has *sprung!*

Council's impact on our child-clients can often be life-changing. There are many students with stories similar to Nathan, who received the education services he needed with guidance from our Education Navigation team.

Your donation allows us to continue working towards a brighter future blossoming with opportunity for all children, not just those we serve.

If you've been wanting to get involved in making real change in your community, it's never too late to "*spring into action!*"

Spring Into Action Today!

Council Changemakers

This month we are excited to spotlight Emily Kim,
our Education Law Program Policy Advocate!

EMILY KIM

Policy Advocate,
ELP



What led you to Council and how long have you been here?

After law school, I was a staff attorney at Disability Rights North Carolina and the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy. I was introduced to Council through its collaborations with those organizations on matters related to children's educational and health care rights. I've been at Council for about two months, and I already feel at home.

Tell us about your role: As the Policy Advocate in the Education Law Program, I support Council's systemic efforts to ensure equitable access to education. Many of the children we serve face complex barriers to success in school. My team addresses these barriers through creative and multipronged advocacy.

What inspires you about Council? I enjoy supporting the children of our communities by addressing broader issues we see in our legal cases. Meaningful systemic change is grounded in individual experiences. I like collaborating with my teammates on bridging that gap so that we can make a positive difference for a greater number of students. There's no playbook for this work, so we have flexibility to problem-solve using a variety of tools from the law and public policy to data analysis and coalition building.

What do you wish people knew about Council? On paper, our young clients are often portrayed negatively- unmotivated, oppositional, incapable. Our systems have a tendency to label and place blame on them for their circumstances. Yet, many of our clients go on to brighter futures once they receive the support of which they've been deprived. I am inspired by our clients' perseverance and feel a great personal and professional responsibility to show up for them. My colleagues inspire me to be an advocate for the people our children are, beyond their legal or personal circumstances.

Where are you from or where did you grow up? I was born and raised in central Connecticut and spent most of my life in the Northeast. I came to North Carolina for a job opportunity, but I love it here and am quite settled at this point.

Outside of work, how do you like to spend your time? I love to crochet, especially coming up with my own designs and patterns. I also enjoy learning languages, and I'm studying five right now. It's mostly for fun, although I'm aiming for fluency in Spanish so I can better meet the needs of many of the children Council serves.

Get Involved with Council

Spread the Word: Please help us share our mission with your friends and family by forwarding them this newsletter. We are also looking for community members and philanthropists to help accelerate our fundraising efforts. If you're interested in learning how you can get involved, email advancement@cfcrights.org.

Volunteer: We have [multiple opportunities to volunteer](#), most notably with our Custody Advocacy Program (CAP). You do not need to be a lawyer or have legal experience to volunteer. Email volunteer@cfcrights.org for more information.

Give: You can [donate online](#) or by sending a check to: ATTN: Council for Children's Rights, 601 East 5th Street, Suite 510, Charlotte, NC 28202. Email advancement@cfcrights.org with any questions and to learn more.



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