

Know Your Rights: The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

By Sarah Mueller and Liz Weintraub

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What is FERPA?

FERPA is the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. It is a law that says parents of students in elementary, middle, and high school have rights to their child's education records. It says these records are private or only for the school district and parents.



What are Education Records?

Education records are papers about school history, grades, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and more. Medical, police, or job records are not a part of FERPA.



What about when I'm in college?

Once you are 18 or going to college, FERPA says the right to your education records is now yours, not your parents. This means that if your parents want to see your grades or other school records they have to ask you.



My parents pay for my college tuition. Does that give them more rights?

No. FERPA says it is your right to have your college records private from your parents. If your parents want to see your records, they have to ask you and the school. You have to say yes or no to them in writing and share your decision with the school. If you say yes, your college still does not have to allow your parents to see your records.



I talk to my parents a lot about college and need their support.

Does FERPA mean I can't talk to them about college anymore?

You and your parents should talk about what you do and do not want to share about your time in college. FERPA says it is your right to keep your records private, but talking with your parents and deciding what you want to share with them is important. Share what you have decided with your college counselor, staff, and teachers.



Disclosure of information...Where can I go for help about FERPA and my rights of my education records?

Ask your college program coordinator, counselor, or disability support services office for more information. Watch the U.S. Department of Education video: Student Privacy 101: FERPA for Parents and Students. If you are worried your rights were not respected, find out more information about submitting a complaint.

This publication was created based on *Communicating with Your Student's College under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*, Think College Insight Brief, Issue No. 31

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sarah Mueller is 2019 Disability Policy Fellow at AUCD. Liz Weintraub is Senior Advocacy Specialist on the Public Policy Team at AUCD.

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