



## Jennifer Aardema

**Associate**

**San Diego**

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### What can I solve for you?

Clients appreciate the sharp insight, work ethic, listening skills, compassion and steady demeanor I bring to an array of the special education and student issues they encounter. While I take a microscopic view to their immediate challenges, I also see their circumstances through a wide-angle lens and help them with their long-term goals.

### What's it like to work with me?

I'm an enthusiastic problem-solver. I find it highly rewarding to help special education students, not only individually, but also on a larger scale, by guiding school districts in creating policies and environments that allow them to best meet the children's learning needs. At the same time, I'm always working to protect clients' interests and enabling them to make the most of their limited funding.

*"Education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments...it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education."*



## Overview

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**Jennifer Aardema focuses her practice on special education, particularly where that area intersects with student issues, discipline matters and the regulations of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. With a student-centric approach, Jennifer helps clients by drawing on her calm, engaging and empathetic manner and deep knowledge of special education gained from her background as the older sibling of a brother with special needs.**

Jennifer's dual understanding of families' and administrators' perspectives make her an ideal conduit and mediator—someone uniquely suited to preserve the relationships between parents and school districts. She guides her clients in implementing sound strategies that best help children by optimizing the often-insufficient resources they receive from taxpayers and from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Providing comprehensive evaluations of special education students, Jennifer examines their school records and other data to ascertain the types of services they've received, how much progress they've made, and whether additional steps should be taken to fulfill the goals set out in Individual Education Plans (IEPs). From these analyses, she also gains a clear picture of school districts' likely liability in the event a case goes to settlement negotiations.

Jennifer previously worked in special education law as a summer associate at a California education law firm and also interned throughout law school at the education and disability clinic and the child advocacy institute. The recipient of many awards and honors, Jennifer is very happy to combine her longstanding interest in law with her passion for public education and her strong desire to help special-needs students.

## Involvement

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### Professional Affiliations

- Advocates for Children and Education, President
- Representatives for Youth in Academic Affairs, Chair

### Certifications

- Wiley W. Manuel Certificate for Pro-bono Legal Services

## Recognition

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- Distinguished Service Award, San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program



- Exceptional Achievement Award for “Academic excellence, service and contributions to the University” from California State University, Northridge
- Pro-Bono Service Recognition *with High Distinction*
- CALI Excellence for the Future Awards in Professional Responsibility
- James A. D’Angelo Outstanding Child Advocate Award
- Student Leader Scholarship

## After School

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My husband and I have three dogs and a bird, and we love to take them to the beach and on our hikes. Yes, we even take the bird—he wears a little harness. I also love baking, farmers markets and filling spaces with houseplants until they look like jungles.

## Education

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- University of San Diego School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*)
- California State University, Northridge (B.A., Child and Adolescent Development, *cum laude*)

## Admissions

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### Bar Admissions

- California

## Related Services

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- Special Education
- Student Rights & Discipline
- Title IX

## Related Clients

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- Public Education K-12