



Building Your Advocacy Skills

When working with professionals, parents often have to advocate for their child or family. For some parents, finding ways to shape the system to fit your child's needs can be overwhelming. Try these tips to help you stand up for your child's needs:

Be Informed.

- Know your rights as well as your child's rights and the resources available.

Know your child's strengths and share them.

- Meetings often focus on what your child needs, but sharing your child's strengths allows for support teams to build on what your child does well and what helps your child participate successfully.

Ask Questions.

- To fully understand your child's program, the supports that are available to them, and potential accommodations that can be made, you will likely need to ask many questions. Don't be afraid to ask for questions or disagree with a school or agency's recommendations.

Build Relationships.

- Keeping frequent contact with your child's team helps remind them that you like to be included in decision-making. When it comes time to collaborate, professionals may be more likely to pull you into the conversations sooner, saving time and stress.

Get Connected.

- Find other caregivers to build community with. Other parents who share similar experiences may help you become more knowledgeable about what you can do to access services and resources your child needs.

Keep Records.

- Create a system that works for you to keep up with your child's records and documentation, so that you share with other professionals what has worked and not worked in the past.