

Advocacy for All

Student Engagement *during* IEP/ITP/IPP meetings

HELPING STUDENTS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



WHY SHOULD WE FOCUS ON ADVOCACY?

- ✓ Students need to feel valued, welcomed, and connected.
- ✓ Students with disabilities have the right to speak and act on their own behalf.
- ✓ Students with disabilities must have the power to make day-to-day decisions about their own lives and the services they receive free from manipulation of others.

WHAT IS SELF ADVOCACY?

- ✓ Speaking up for yourself
- ✓ Communicating your strengths, needs, and wishes
- ✓ Being able to listen to the opinions of others, even when their opinion differ from yours
- ✓ Having a sense of self-respect
- ✓ Taking responsibility for yourself
- ✓ Knowing your rights
- ✓ Knowing where to get help or who to go to with a question

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

Create a welcoming environment for students and parents.

Solicit comments and suggestions from students and parents in classrooms and the school as a whole.

Discuss with all parents the importance of their participation in their children's education.

Invite parents to serve on advisory councils and/or committees that are responsible for addressing everything from school safety, curriculum development, and textbook selection to disciplinary policies and dress codes.

Communicate regularly about student's progress, not just when problems arise.

Encourage parents to learn more about what their children are learning in school, what assessments are conducted during the year, how they can support their children's study habits, and what their school district's graduation requirements are.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Visit the school regularly and reinforce in your child's mind that school and home are connected – it is an integral part of the whole family life.

Familiarize yourself with rules, procedures, and specific ways parents can be involved in the school.

Know your child's teachers. Tell them about your child and ask questions on how you can support what they are teaching.

Communicate with other parents about what works and what does not work; address concerns and approach the problem as a group.

Include yourself in school decisions and network with parent leaders, representatives and families through activities like the PTA, back to school nights, and school events- and stay active.

Participate in trainings and workshops to build your own leadership skills and deepen your knowledge of excellent schools and education programs.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

Think about what is important to you and why.

Plan the steps needed to accomplish your goals.

Do what the plan says. Ask for and use supports if needed.

Know your rights. Ask for explanations if you don't understand something.

Learn how to ask for and accept help from others. Tell them what would make learning or working easier for you.

Develop an ability to speak up for yourself.

Gain an understanding of your strengths and needs. Learn about the impact of your disability.

Attend all or part of your IEP/ITP/IPP meeting. Introduce yourself. Talk about your interest, strengths, and desires for the future.