



Inspiring hope. Empowering lives.

How To Be A Successful Advocate For Your Child

Understand your child's disability

- Know your child and their needs
- You are an important contributing member of the team for your child
- Know how your child learns best and what reinforcers to use
- Ask for providers to track progress
- Regularly re-evaluate if services and supports are appropriate and effective

Plan for the short term and long term

- Develop short term goals as well as some for the future
- Work towards independence as appropriate for your child's level of functioning
- Set goals for academic, behavioral, social, and emotional growth

Manage your emotions

- Remain calm while advocating for your child
- Remind providers that caring for a child with a disability is emotionally challenging and exhausting
- Learn the art of negotiation
- Bring an extra person to help you (and listen), if possible

Document everything in writing

- Keep logs of phone calls, save emails, and write short, professional letters documenting meetings and events after they have occurred to document what happened, what was agreed upon and what remains to be done. Be as detailed as possible and as factual as possible.
- Be organized.