



Speak Up!

Advocating for Your Child

A parent is a child's biggest advocate – at home, at school, in the community and wherever else needed.

When your children are too young or inexperienced to champion a cause that could make their lives better, you can be their voice.

Here are helpful steps:

Observe and record. If you are advocating for a specific right for your child, keep good records of conversations, emails and agreements between the parties involved, and note your child's reactions or behaviors. If you are seeking protection at school from bullying, for example, note the dates, times and locations of the bullying and what your child experienced.

Become familiar with laws that pertain to your child's situation.

Children in this country have rights, just like adults. Be aware of the services your child should be receiving at school, in a health care setting and otherwise, and be prepared to take a stand if those rights are being violated or ignored.

Find a support group or organization that includes parents whose children are facing issues similar to your child's. You may discover in such a setting that most of the resources and support you need are readily available.

Be willing to meet with teachers, political leaders or other appropriate individuals to get the facts and be heard. Go into these meetings prepared to be respectful, yet firm. Take records and information to support your request, but be open to ideas and suggestions that may be helpful.

Don't be intimidated. Because you know your child best, you are the best person to fight for what he or she needs. With help and guidance, you can do it!

