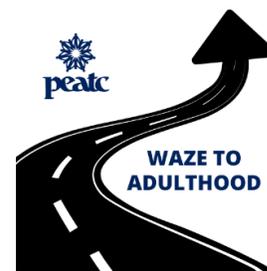


A PEATC

Do You Know....



Fact Sheet for Parents Transition Guide: Self-Advocacy

What is Self-Advocacy?

Self-advocacy is an important life-long skill. It is about learning how to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your life, learning how to get information so that you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out who will support you in your journey, knowing your rights and responsibilities, solving problems, listening, and learning, asking for help, and even making friends.

We all learn to advocate for ourselves, from an early age. From convincing mom and dad to get us a phone, to asking for pizza instead of burgers for dinner, to asking for a raise at our job. But for some people, it takes more support to learn these skills.

Building self-advocacy skills in your child with a disability will help them succeed in school and in life. You and their teachers can help them build these skills from an early age, the earlier the better. But it is never too late to start and improving self-advocacy skill.

Ways to Teach Your Child Self-Advocacy

- ✓ Talk about what they are good at and what they need help with.
- ✓ Make a list of people and programs that help support them.
- ✓ Share about laws or policies that support their needs.
- ✓ Help them learn about their disability and how it affects them.
- ✓ Have them ask people to work with them to help meet their goals.
- ✓ Give opportunities for them to practice their self-advocacy skills with a friend or a teacher.
- ✓ Have them go to IEP and other meetings and share their ideas and their concerns.
- ✓ Encourage them to spend time with other self-advocates by going to trainings, community activities or programs offered by disability organizations, like Centers for Independent Living.

Self-Advocacy Skills Will Help Your Child:

- Solve problems at home, at school--anywhere;
- Get better services from doctors, teachers, and others;
- Get the education, housing, and community services that they need;
- Feel proud of themselves and be more self-confident.



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Fact Sheet for Virginia's Parents

Rate Your Child's Advocacy Skills

- ✓ Do they know about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 and understand how these laws apply to them?
- ✓ Do they know what natural supports they use and how those supports are helpful?
- ✓ Does your child communicate their needs/wants and ask questions when they need more information?
- ✓ Does your child know what is in their IEP/transition plan and were they involved in creating the plan?
- ✓ Do they feel confident in expressing themselves and making decisions about their own life?
- ✓ Are they able to stand up for themselves?

Ways to Communicate Strengths, Concerns, and Needs

There are many ways for your child to share information in a way that works for them. Even young people with significant disabilities can be good self-advocates.

- ✓ They can talk verbally, in person or over the phone.
- ✓ They can write a letter, email, or text.
- ✓ They can use technology such as speech to text software or assistive technology devices.
- ✓ They can communicate using pictures, photos, or videos.

Make sure to let your child know the following about themselves:

You know yourself best!

Your opinions are important!

You are a self-advocate!

Check out these Resources

I'm Determined

<https://www.imdetermined.org>

National Parent Center Hub

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/priority-self-advocacy/>

Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)

<https://www.sabeusa.org>

Speak Up! Using What You've Got to Get What You Want

http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/YouthSpaceDoc/speak_up.pdf

The Arc of the U.S.

<https://thearc.org/get-involved/self-advocacy/>

Voices Together

<https://www.voicestogether.com.au/self-advocates/toolkits-resources-how-to/>



PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools, and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.



The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H235F200001. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government Project Officer. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Any information contained in this training is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.



Special thanks to Tennessee STEP for providing some of the information in this Fact Sheet.