

Self advocacy handout

Self-advocacy and intervention must always go together

It is never too soon to include the child in a meaningful way

Below are recommendations to build advocacy in each stage of development

Pre-K

*** Start a student-led portfolio that will follow their educational journey. Allow/encourage student to choose things to include**

*** Teach communication skills and social skills. Look for ways that your child is asking for help (could be non-verbal as well as verbal). Model and teach more effective ways to ask for help**

Early Elementary School Years

*** Use social stories to demonstrate that asking for help is self-advocacy**

*** Begin teaching students to talk to their classroom teacher, not just their special ed teachers**

*** Increase advocacy through scenarios and role play**

Later Elementary School Years

*** Student should be included in future meetings with parents and the IEP team**

- * Allow the student to contribute areas of strength and areas of concern**

- * Engage in peer mentoring. Allowing students with disabilities to assist one another creates an opportunity for building friendships, fosters feelings of worth and increases confidence**

- * Do a presentation to the class about their disability. Helps the student do research about themselves and helps the rest of the class gain a better understanding of disability**

- * Have student spend a day at middle school to help with transition**

Middle School Years

- * Share student-led portfolio with IEP team. Look back at elementary school with increased involvement**

- * Continue peer mentoring. New school, new students—time to reinforce strengths and friendships**

- * Take an advocacy class**

- * Use IEP to ensure smooth transition to high school. Address expectations, allow student to express worries**

- * Have student spend the day at high school to help with the transition**

High School Years

- * Advocacy social skills class**
- * Take classes that prepare you for college, if that is your goal**
- * Understand your diagnosis—what is it? how does it impact you? what things help you succeed?**
- * Pair with a recent grad to learn transition skills**

College

- * Know yourself: are you ready to move away? can you advocate for your needs? do you know your major?**
- * Be knowledgeable about disability**
- * Research possible colleges: do they offer services you need?**
- * Find the disability office and open your file**

Work

- * Research inclusive employers**
- * Understand when you should disclose a disability**
- * Know your rights to workplace accommodations**

Know that at each step of the way, there will be setbacks and challenges. You may feel like you have to advocate again and again, but the more practice you have, the easier it will be.