



Advocating for Your Child's Educational Needs

When advocating for your child, try to start off with a positive attitude. Be aware of your child's educational and legal rights, but do not start off by quoting the law to staff. For children in the public schools, there is specific, legally mandated system to help determine the child's educational needs. If you feel that your child needs educational testing or special education resources, ask for an ARD meeting. Often parents can assist the school in gathering information to determine whether the child needs testing or special help. If your child has a special educational plan (IEP), always review it carefully before the formal meeting and bring up specific items that you would like included. If possible, both parents should come to the meeting. If one parent is feeling angry or frustrated, try to have the calmer parent do the talking. If the special education process is confusing, you may seek out an educational advocate to come to the meeting with you. If the school does the testing, you do not have to pay for it. You may obtain outside evaluations, at your own expense, to bring to the school meeting.

If you have the time and energy, try to volunteer time for your child's school. Volunteers can free up some of the teacher's time. This may, indirectly, give her more time to focus on your child's needs. This also gives the parent an opportunity to get to know the school environment and some of the child's classmates. Having a good knowledge of the functioning of your child's school can help clear up potential misunderstandings.

Some parents choose to arrange for private evaluations or tutoring. Speech therapy, occupational therapy and some other services may be covered by some insurance plans. Some companies have dependent medical care plans which allow the parent to put pre-tax money aside for medical and child care expenses. This can be used to cover certain kinds of assessments and treatments not covered by insurance or paid by the school. Check with your employer or tax specialist. Many private schools have arrangements with tutors and speech therapists. In these cases, the parents usually pay for the services. In some situations, a child in a private school may qualify for free services funded by the public schools. In this case, the parent usually has to drive the child to a public school to get the services there.

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Ultimately the most important thing is to instill in your child a positive self-esteem and an attitude of responsibility and mastery. The child should be encouraged to learn all he can about their situation. At the same time, the child should take responsibility for his actions and help to make positive changes.

Need additional Advice?? Ask our School Violence Prevention Experts. [CLICK HERE](#)

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