

SEPTA Presentation
SELF-ADVOCACY and INDEPENDENCE
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WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY?

- THE ABILITY TO ARTICULATE ONE'S NEEDS AND MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED TO MEET THOSE NEEDS



Key Elements of Self-Advocacy

1. Understanding One's Needs
2. Communicating Those Needs to Others
3. Knowing What Supports Are Available

Why Is Self-Advocacy Important?

- EMPOWERS YOUR CHILD TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES
- EMPOWERS YOUR CHILD TO FULFILL THEIR OWN NEEDS
- HELPS YOUR CHILD DEVELOP PROBLEM SOLVING/CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS
- INCREASES FEELINGS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-WORTH
- ALLOWS YOUR CHILD TO HAVE A VOICE!



SELF-ADVOCACY IS IMPORTANT
AT ALL DEVELOPMENTAL
LEVELS



" You are being demoted.
You were the
micromanager, then the
manager, and now you need
to be a COACH"

(Susan Schechtman -
Former MS Principal in Los
Angeles)

Turn and Talk - In your
opinion, what does the quote
mean?

How does your role change
as a parent as you foster
self - advocacy and
independence in your child ?

Why does this happen and
what might it look like?

Preschool/Elementary School Aged Children

- Being open about learning and thinking differences
- Discuss how their issues affect them
- Practicing what to say to teachers
 - Sentence starters
 - Asking for help
 - Role play
 - Asking for breaks
- Let your child be a decision maker



Adolescents/Teenagers

Middle School:

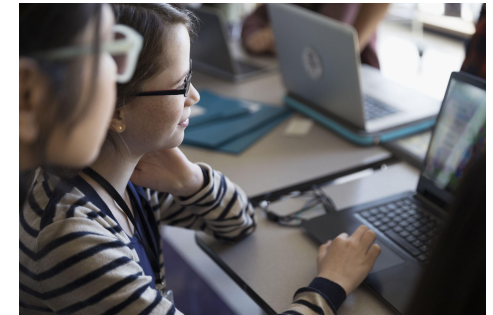
- Navigating changing social relationships/conflicts
- Attending after school clubs based on interests
- Attending extra help - do they know what they don't know?
- Developing an understanding of their learning interests and begin to understand strengths/weaknesses



Adolescents/Teenagers

High School:

- Emailing teachers
- Scheduling/time management
- Obtaining working papers/
driver's license
- Accessing Resource room/learning specialists/
tutors
- Self-monitoring/accountability
- Attendance at CSE Meetings



Adolescents/Teenagers

All IEPs include the following four parts:

1. Present Level of Performance
2. Accommodations and Modifications
3. Goals
4. Services

Present Level of Performance:

This part lists my strengths and needs and may include test scores and explanations, observations, comments from you, teachers, parents/guardians, and others.

- I can provide information or help write part of the Present Level of Performance.*

Accommodations:

How schools and my teachers adapt, adjust, or change the physical environment, instruction or services for me so that my disability does not affect my learning. These are based upon my special needs.

- I can help the IEP team decide what accommodations help me.*

Goals:

What I intend to accomplish.

- I can help develop the goals of my IEP. I also need to help monitor my progress towards these goals.*

Services:

Special supports I will need to benefit from school and reach my goals.

- I need to share information about me and the supports I need.*

Young Adults

- Transition to adult services (supportive employment, vocational programs, jobs, day habs)
- Transition to College
- Living on their Own (teaching functional skills)

HIGH SCHOOL

- Courses and course work may have been modified
- Services are delivered
- Parents are involved
- The same schedule every single day
- Homework was given daily/weekly
- Teachers might have been flexible with assignments
- Maybe work did not have to be shown
- Maybe due dates were flexible
- It might have been okay to be late without a specific penalty

COLLEGE

- All students are expected to take required courses and complete the coursework as assigned
- If you do not request accommodations, they are not provided to you. Self-advocacy is expected!
- Parents are not allowed to be as involved - FERPA
- Schedule will not be the same every day
- Assignments and exams are listed on syllabus for the whole semester
- Work must be shown, and done in format requested
- Work is due on assigned dates, and times
- Three latenesses = 1 Absence; Three absences or more = Fail (varies by class)
- Checking email is required and extremely important!

How To Recognize Your Child may be Struggling with Independent Learning Skills



NOTE

- **Notice**
 - Be open to what you are seeing
- **Observe**
 - Focus on the behavior may help you pick up on patterns
- **Talk**
 - Anyone that interacts with and may have insights (i.e., educators, caregivers, pediatrician)
- **Engage**
 - Find a time when your child is able to have this conversation

Creating Independence

- Set goals with your children
- Check ins
- Establish a routine that is realistic
 - Allow freedom and flexibility
 - Use visuals (checklists, to do lists, picture/written schedules)
- Provide choices when possible



Our Role As Parents

Encourage Self-Exploration - help to identify values, strengths, weaknesses, etc.

It's Okay to Ask for Help - asking for help is not a weakness

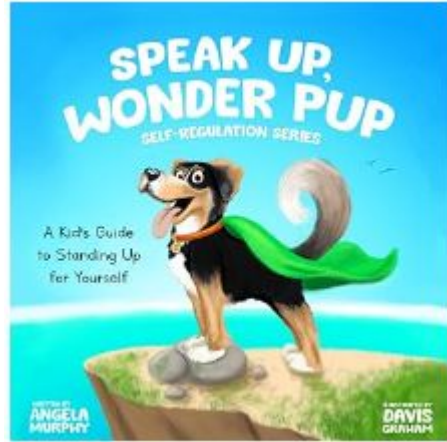
Listen - Actively listen without the intent to solve the problem for your child

Plan for the Future - Encourage independence and resiliency and practice the skills!

Build Self-Esteem - PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE!

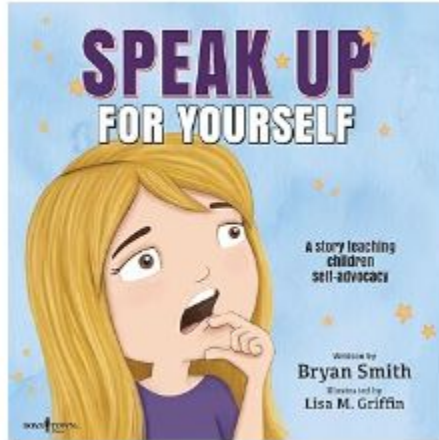
Stay Positive - Focus on how weaknesses can be strengths

Books



Preschool

<https://a.co/d/8UFvyN1>



Ages 5-11

<https://a.co/d/hiSHNSD>

Articles/Links

<https://yourteenmag.com/teenager-school/teenager-middle-school/fostering-independence>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/social-emotional-learning/social-skills-for-kids/letting-middle-schoolers-assert-their-independence.html>

<https://nacdd.org/self-advocacy-resources/>



Questions/Comments

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