

YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S ADVOCATE

A Parent's Advocacy Toolkit

1. Mindset for Advocacy

- **Be Calm but Firm:** Advocacy is about collaboration, not confrontation.
- **Document Everything:** Keep notes on meetings, dates, and what was said.
- **Know Your Rights:** Every child has the right to safety, fair treatment, and support in school, healthcare, and community programs.
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2. Practical Tools

Email/Letter Template to Teachers or Schools

Subject: Support for [Child's Name] in [Class/Grade]

Dear [Teacher/Principal],

I'd like to discuss [child's name]'s progress in [specific area]. I've noticed [concern/strength] and would like to understand how the school is supporting them. Could we set up a meeting to talk through strategies and possible resources?

Thank you for partnering with me to help [child's name] succeed.

Sincerely,[Your Name]

Conversation Script with a Teacher/Doctor

- **Start Positive:** "I really appreciate the effort you've put into supporting my child."
- **State Concern Clearly:** "I've noticed that [child's name] struggles with [specific issue]."
- **Ask for Solutions:** "What supports or options are available?"
- **Confirm Next Steps:** "Can we agree on a plan and follow-up in two weeks?"

Meeting Checklist

- Write down questions in advance.
- Bring relevant documents (test results, report cards, medical notes).
- Take notes during the meeting.
- End by summarizing: "So just to confirm, the next step is ____."
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3. Advocacy in Different Settings

School

- Request learning support plans or special accommodations.
- Attend parent-teacher meetings prepared with notes.
- If concerns continue, escalate respectfully (teacher → principal → school board).

Healthcare

- Ask doctors to explain medical terms in plain language.
- Request a second opinion if needed.
- Keep a health binder for records, prescriptions, and test results.

Community

- If your child faces bullying, speak with program leaders right away.
- Ensure inclusion in sports, activities, and faith groups.
- Connect with local support networks for resources.
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4. Empowering Your Child to Self-Advocate

- Teach them to say:
 - “I don’t understand, can you explain again?”
 - “I need help with this.”
 - “That makes me uncomfortable.”
- Role-play scenarios at home.
- Celebrate when they use their voice.
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5. Quick Phrases for Parents

- “Can you explain that in another way?”
- “What options are available for support?”
- “I’d like to see this in writing, please.”
- “Let’s agree on a clear next step.”

Save this and share with others just in case it is needed sometime in the future.

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