

# What is

## Self-Advocacy

A guide for young advocates

based on training materials developed by Kylie Moore



Self-advocacy is the ability to speak up for yourself and communicate your wants and needs to others. It is also learning how to make your own decisions and knowing when to ask for help. It also means understanding your disability and how it will affect your life.



## Why is self-advocacy so important?

Learning about self-advocacy will help you find your voice and discover more about yourself. It also helps you grow and become more independent. The more students are encouraged to advocate for themselves, the more they will want to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. You should learn self-advocacy skills as early as possible.

## 10 tips to become a self-advocate



1. Speak up for yourself and tell others what you want and need.
2. Learn about your strengths and the things you might need help with.
3. Learn about your disability and be able to explain how it affects your life.
4. Start making simple decisions, like picking out your clothes and deciding what you want for lunch. The earlier you begin making your own decisions, the easier it will be to make decisions throughout your life.
5. Try new things on your own. If you see your brothers and sisters or other kids doing things for themselves that you believe you could do, come up with a plan to see if you can do those things on your own.
6. Ask for help when you need it in school. For example, if you have trouble seeing the board or screen at the front of the class, ask your teacher if you can sit closer to the front. If you have trouble taking notes, ask if you can have a copy of your teacher's notes. If you don't understand something in class, do not be afraid to ask questions.
7. Attend and participate in your IEP meetings.
8. Set goals for yourself that you want to achieve each year.
9. Share with teachers what works and does not work for you.
10. Sharing your thoughts and opinions in class and at home with your family.

## Self-advocacy questions to think about

- What are some of my goals for the future?
- Am I the one making most of the decisions in my life?
- What things could I do to become a more independent person?
- Who do I have in my life that can support me in becoming more independent?

