



Project 10: Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy refers to advocating on one's own behalf. To advocate means to speak up or defend a cause or person, and self-advocacy skills including being assertive, knowing your rights, speaking up, and negotiating. Both self-advocacy skills and self-determination skills lead to empowerment.

(Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998; p. 10)

To be an effective self-advocate, students need to learn

★ ★ How to Advocate

- Assertiveness
- Effective communication (verbal, written, pictures)
- Negotiation
- Compromise in real-world situations

What to Advocate

- Rights and responsibilities under
 - Individual's with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Rights available to all citizens

(Wehmeyer & Shogren, 2013, p. 54)

Opportunities for students to advocate

- IEP meetings (postsecondary goals, annual goals, etc.)
- Classes (accommodations)
- Work Experience/Employment (including interviewing)
- Campus and community experiences (e.g. participating in extracurricular activities)
- Planning family activities

Activities to Increase Self-Determination

Students should practice the following:

- Setting personal goals
- Solving problems that act as barriers to achieving these goals
- Making appropriate choices based on personal preferences and interests
- Participating in decisions that impact quality of life
- Advocating for himself/herself
- Creating action plans to achieve goals
- Self-regulating and self-managing day-to-day actions

(Powers et al., 1996)