

Coaching your child to advocate for themselves and their health needs

Advocacy skills include speaking up, knowing their rights, negotiating, and problem solving. Young children can be taught to advocate for themselves. Advocating lets children to share their needs and wants so they can get the best tools to help them fulfill their desires. If a child can share the reasons why they are asking for things, it can encourage others to help them. It can also help children build their language skills and give them the ability to understand many different situations.

It's important to start teaching advocacy skills when kids are very young to later prepare them for adult life skills. Starting with simple role play such as asking for help at school is good practice for asking for help at a store. The more your child learns about their needs, the more empowered they will feel. By supporting your child, you can help them grow, build their self-esteem, and succeed.

- Chronic health issue (ask questions, make appointments)
- Peanut/Severe allergy (check labels, when in doubt, don't!)
- Bully at school (standing up for yourself, telling a trusted adult)
- Adaptive learning environment (i.e. quiet reading area, sit closer to board, self-organizing therapy tools and techniques) and a Family Action Plan

A main part of advocacy is disclosure. Disclosure is knowing what information to share with whom, when, and why. Everyone should have a say in their own lives, no matter what challenges they have.

We can help teach others how to talk about their needs and wants

Key parts of this education include:

Practice + Education

- Building communication skills
- Teaching negotiation tactics
- Role playing and role model education
- Sharing needs and wants

Realization + Implementation

- Understanding the importance of decision making
- Understanding different perspectives
- Giving a sense of responsibility
- Giving time to learn how (struggle is ok)

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Author: ImPACT | Approved by Patient Education Committee | Valid through 2025

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