Advocacy 101
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Personal Information

- Bachelors in Psychology - Reinhardt University
- Worked in the disability community for 8 years
- Graduate of Partners and Policy Making 2011
- Completed LEND Advocacy Fellowship at Georgia State 2012
- Created Ambassador Program, a Self Advocacy class in 2014 at All About Developmental Disabilities (AADD)
- Facilitated 7 Ambassador classes with 37 graduates
- Employed 5 years with the Bobby Dodd Institute (BDI) formerly AADD
A note on the Presentation

• I usually give this Advocacy presentation to my students in the Ambassador program who are young adults with disabilities who are learning to be Self Advocates.

• I have changed the presentation to gear it more towards parents who want to teach their children how to be Self Advocates.
Topics Covered

• Encourage your child to have their own voice

• Define self-advocacy and how it will help your child become more independent

• Strategies to teach your child how to advocate for themselves

• Advocacy vs. self-advocacy
Topics Covered

• Issues that you or your child has a passion for

• Discuss opportunities that your child can advocate for themselves
• When children with disabilities are young, they count on their parents to take care of them, and make most of their decisions.

• As people with disabilities get older, they need their parents to encourage them to take an active role in our lives, to become more independent.
Having your voice heard

- As a parent it may be hard for you to let your children have more control over their lives.
- The more you do to teach them to advocate for themselves the more it will help them to become more independent in the long run.
Having your voice heard

• Always remind your child that their voice and ideas matter.
• Coach your child to speak up for themselves and express their ideas
Questions to think about

• What things could your child start doing on their own?

• Does your child make any of their decisions on their own?

• Does your child know his or her daily schedule?

• Does your child have goals for the future?
What is Advocacy?

• Advocacy is standing up for an idea or cause.

• Speaking up on behalf of someone else
What is Advocacy?

- Advocacy is standing and speaking up for your rights and the rights of others.
What is Self Advocacy

• Self Advocacy is speaking up for yourself.

• Asking for what you want or need.

• Knowing what is going on in your life
Teaching Advocacy

• Advocacy is a skill that can and should be taught at an early age.
• It can be as simple as asking your child what clothes they want to wear or what activities they want to participate in.
• The more choices they have the more independent they will become.
Things your child can do to become a Self Advocate

• Teach them about the resources that are available to them.

• Teach them their rights.

• Help them understand their disability. And how to explain it to others.
Issues you are passionate about

• Are there any issues you or your child are passionate about?

• What could you do to advocate for those issues?
Examples of Self Advocacy

• Picking out your own clothes.

• Deciding what activities you want to do on the weekends.

• Keeping track of your daily schedule.

• Setting your own goals.
Examples of Self Advocacy

• Going and participating in IEP/Vocational Rehab meetings.

• Asking for accommodations in school or at work.

• Telling what kinds of jobs you are interested in.

• Asking questions when you don’t understand something.
Examples of Self-Advocacy

• Understanding your rights as a person with a disability and being able to:
  
  • Send a letter about your rights not being met to your Legislator.
  
  • Talking to Teachers/Counselors about your needs.
  
  • Asking for accessible seating or better access at a restaurant, concert, or sporting event.
Self-Advocacy Story

• This activity can help your child remember an advocacy experience that they had.

• Ask your child to think of a time when they stood up for themselves or someone else.

• Describe the situation
  - What made them want to do something?
  - What actions did they take?
  - What happened?
  - How did they feel afterwards?
What would you do?
What Would You Do?

• This is an advocacy game that I play with my students in the Ambassador program.
• It helps students improve their advocacy and decision-making skills.
• I give them situations that could happen in real life.
• Students are asked to pick an answer, and explain their choice.
Situation 1

You see a student bulling another student using the R word. What Would you Do?
A. Scream back at them and call them names.

B. Do nothing and walk away.

C. Tell your teacher what you heard and saw.

D. Talk to the other student letting them know why they should not say those things.
Situation 2

• You are interested in applying for a job. You read the application online and feel like you may need assistance understanding and answering the questions. What would you do to get the help you need while trying to remain independent?
A. Ask your parents to fill out the application for you.

B. Fill out the application on your own and leave blank the questions that you don’t understand.

C. Try to fill out as much of the application on your own then ask your parents to explain the questions you don’t understand to you.
Situation 3

You have an accommodation that you need tests read to you, but your teacher forgets.

What Would You Do?
A. Do nothing, take the test without the accommodation.

B. Remind your teacher that test have to be read to you.

C. Yell at your teacher.

D. Put your head down and cry.
Situation 4

• Your mom wants you to work at a warehouse sorting products but you want to work at a bakery making cookies and cakes. What Do You Do?
A. Agree with your mom, and not say what you want.

B. Tell your mom what you want to do.

C. You apply for a job at the bakery and not at the warehouse without telling anyone.

D. You argue with your mom and say she never wants what you want.
Closing Thoughts

• Teach our child about Self Advocacy at an early age

• Always encourage your child to have their own voice

• Remember teaching Self- Advocacy will help your child become more independent in every area of their lives.
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