

Self-Advocacy – in Education and Life (Feeling Empowered)

Self-advocacy is basically about people speaking up for themselves and making their own decisions about important goals in their life. What can you do? We all have a role to play in self-advocacy.

- Speak up and advocate for support when you need it.
- Speak up to make sure you have a say in the decisions which affect you now and your child
- Speak up to ask questions to accomplish goals. Be empowered!

Where do I start?

- Learn your rights and responsibilities to know what you are able to change in your child's education or in who is in charge in any situation you are seeking change. It could be the mayor, legislators, police department. This list can go on and on.... endless.
- Learn the goals to know what you are aiming to change or improve. High expectations for your child in education. High expectations for those with disabilities to live independently in their respective communities.
- Learn to find other people who can assist you in taking charge of the educational change or any other changes you are seeking to make.
- Learn you need to take a stand to empower your path to fulfill the change.
- Learn about the resources that are available to help you reach your goal.

Tips to Promote Self-Advocacy:

- ✓ Define what you need. Keep focus on what you are aiming to improve.
- ✓ Know the system and procedures of the educational system or any system and the process
- ✓ Know your resources available.
- ✓ Be an active participant in the process.
- ✓ Get enough information to make informed choices.
- ✓ If necessary, have a friend or member of your family to come with you to the meeting.
- ✓ Keep a folder of what you have completed and what your steps of action are going to be.
- ✓ Keep a record of the people you talked to, what and when it happened. Write it down. Save your paper trail.
- ✓ Be specific about what you are seeking. Before you go in and ask for something – be sure of what it is you want. Ex. If you go in and say I need

a car and really you need a van with a lift – more than likely you will not get what you need without being specific

OFFER RESOLUTIONS:

If you have an idea of a resolution that would work – share it. Be sure to do your work and know how this will support you and/or your child.

Most of all remember YOU have a voice at the table and YOU have value.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact:

WV Parent Training and Information

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