

10 Ways You Can Advocate For Your Child With A Learning Disability!

By [Jim O'Keefe](#)

Did you know that you are the most important person in your child's life? Of course you did.

What exactly is an advocate? An advocate is someone who speaks up for someone else, or who acts on behalf of another person. As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else, and you are in the best position to speak for him and act on his behalf.

Here are 10 ways you can do that:

1. Realize from the beginning that advocating for your child takes a lot of time. Advocating involves a great deal of research, meeting time, and communication. That's a given. But the end result will be a successful, responsible, happy young adult who will be able to survive the pitfalls of the real world.
2. Be informed. The more you know about what is going on with your child, the more comfortable you will be in helping others understand him. Here are some ways you can become informed: a. Read all you can about learning disabilities (especially your child's learning disability). b. Attend conferences. That's a great way to learn and make contact with other people faced with similar issues. c. Ask questions - seek answers. d. Join a support group if there is one available. You can learn a lot from a support group.
3. Become familiar with the rules and regulations that apply to your child's special education program. You request copies of the regulations from your local school district office (the special education office, if your district has one) or from your state Department of Education. If you have difficulty understanding these rules and regulations, don't be afraid to ask the special education director or your child's special education teacher to explain them to you.
4. Work together closely with the professionals who work with your child. This should be done in a positive, cohesive way in order for the child to gain the maximum benefit. Get to know these people - talk with them on a regular basis. Volunteer in the classroom. Don't be afraid to ask for a meeting with the teacher(s) if you see something going on at home that can be helped at school, or vice versa.
5. Keep track of the paperwork that is given to you at the team meetings. This is valuable information that should be kept in an organized place so that you can refer to it easily. If you aren't sure how to do this, talk with the special education director or special education teacher. They have a system to keep the records organized in the office. Perhaps they would share that with you.
6. Don't be afraid to communicate with the professionals. Be prepared when you go to the team meetings, and don't be afraid to calmly and assertively state your views. Take notes into the meeting with you so you won't forget the questions you want to ask or the points you want to make. Remember, the professionals need insight from you as much as you need insight from them. The more communication you have, the more powerful the educational team to help your child.
7. Don't be afraid to ask questions. The field of special education is as complex as your child's needs. Asking questions doesn't mean that you are stupid. It just means that you are interested in your child's education and well-being and want to be an

informed parent. You will most likely hear the professionals asking lots of questions as well!!!

8. Keep the lines of communication open with your child. Talk with him about his life both in and outside school. Allow him to express his frustrations, his successes, his disappointments, his hopes, his likes and his dislikes. The better you know your child and what is going on with him, the better you can help other people to work with him.

9. Know your child's strengths and weaknesses and share them with the professionals. Children with learning disabilities, although they have weaker areas, have many strong areas, too. By highlighting these areas, it makes it easier for the professionals to use them as tools to strengthen the weaker skills. It helps them see the child in a more positive light, and it helps them relate to the child. And it helps your child's self-esteem to know that the teachers sees good things in him.

10. Help your child learn to advocate for himself as early as possible. As time goes on, and your child has heard you advocate for him, he will be able to understand how to advocate for himself. If he's heard you say positive things, not only does it increase his self-esteem but it gives him the confidence to speak up for what he needs. Teach him how to communicate how he learns best, what he needs to help him get the most from his classes, and how he feels when confronted with certain issues, such as testing and peer pressure. Give him the power to make his life a success.

You can help your child be able to be a successful, happy, responsible student, well on his way to being the same kind of adult. Advocate for him.

James O'Keefe is the owner of [My Millionaire Friend](#), offering FREE articles, tips, hints, and real-world advice on how to make money with your website. Visit his site or join his FREE newsletter by sending a blank email to jim1@theultimatebook.com.
