

KY-SPIN, Inc. Information Sheet Series

“Advocating for your Child”

Steps to Advocate for your child:

- ♥ **Do your Homework:** Gather Facts and Information; Speak with other families who have been there; Contact agencies/organizations; Learn everything you can
- ♥ **Learn how System Works:** There are rules and guidelines you need to know regarding the issue/concern you have; Learn who the “go to” person is; Follow the appropriate steps; Know what the process is if you do not agree
- ♥ **Plan and Prepare:** Planning can help prevent problems; Write down ideas and suggestions; Ask for help if you need it; Have samples and recommendations from others; Decide exactly what it is you want accomplished
- ♥ **Documentation:** Create a binder and keep a phone log; Put all request in writing; Have any policies, procedures, guidelines provided to you in writing; If it’s not in writing it does not exist
- ♥ **Ask Questions, Listen to Answers:** If you do not ask you will not know; No question is a dumb question; Ask questions in a way to get the answer you want: Open ended questions: requires explanation and Close ended questions: yes or no; Actively listen and do not make prejudgments
- ♥ **Identify Issues:** Make a list and prioritize based on your child’s needs; Go through the Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How this effects your child; Define and describe issue from all angles; Be proactive versus reactive; Develop strategies; Don’t spend your time looking to blame someone
- ♥ **Communication and Collaboration:** Build partnerships; You are an important part of the team; Communicate your needs and desires for your child; You will not always agree with one another; If you feel overwhelmed or upset step away from the situation/meeting
- ♥ **Propose Solutions:** Offer ways to address issues; Be an active part of the solutions; Provide documentation and proven methods; Offer suggestions and ways to address the issue (such as we do this at home and it works)
- ♥ **You are not Alone:** Access parent support groups in your area; Contact organizations/agencies who can help you; Meet/talk with families similar to yours at school, doctors offices, etc.



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Involvement
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