

5 Elements of Successful Advocacy

1. Attitude and Emotions

- Don't yell. Drop your voice when you feel anger.
- If the other party seems to be acting in good faith, respond in-kind.
- Focus on how to get your partner(s) to do what you think they need to do.
- Never threaten anything you are not fully prepared to carry out successfully.
- Imagine yourself as the advocate for someone else's child.

2. Flexibility

- Keep an open mind.
- Rigid thinking (locking down) invites resistance.
- Dialogue invites creativity.
- Model what partnership looks like.
- You can set a time limit on trying new ideas and then review for success.
- Ask the student what he or she thinks may work.

3. Determination

- Flexibility in HOW a problem gets solved is not the same as WHETHER it gets solved.
- Not everything is worth going to war on.
- Ask yourself: is this my issue or my child's?
- If you hear "we'd love to but we don't have that service", your response could be "then WE agree that the service is needed. Tell me how we are going to go about getting it."

4. Creating a Paper Trail

- Even if you remember what people said, you need to be able to PROVE it. Best practice is to keep written records and documentation.




Resources for Families

Need more information on IDEA, IEPs, or special education? Scan the QR code to access our online resources.



Partners Resource Network

 Offices in Lubbock, Houston, Austin, El Paso, and Dallas/Fort Worth

 1.800.866.4726

 info@prntexas.org

 prntexas.org



- Maintain records, letters, correspondence, and notes written at the time events occurred that show what transpired.
- Send a positive, reasonable, factual written note summarizing phone calls and in-person conversations to create a record of what transpired.
- Get organized. Create a workable filing system — one you can keep up.
- Written correspondence should demonstrate:
 - Appreciation,
 - Reason for correspondence, and
 - History of the problem.

5. Knowledge

- Help educators understand your child's disability.
- Keep it SHORT. Keep it SIMPLE.
- Create an outline that includes symptoms and the strategies that work.
- Include your expert to help you.
- ASK: what will we do to support the team's understanding so that my child's needs are met?
- Learn about rights and responsibilities in the law: Study. Attend workshops. Use good books.
- Call your local Parent Training and Information Center for assistance and resources.



Have Questions about ARD Meetings?

Contact Partners Resource Network for assistance at 1-800-866-4726. Our Regional Coordinators are ready to help you with all your IEP concerns and can provide one-on-one individual assistance to fit your needs. All of our services are free of charge to parents and youth with disabilities.



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