

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy means **having someone on your side to help you speak up and be heard.**

An advocate can:

- Listen to what *you* think and feel
- Help you understand meetings, plans, or decisions
- Support you to say what you want (in your own way)
- Speak for you if you find it hard to speak yourself


 The most important thing: **advocacy is about YOUR voice, YOUR choices, and YOUR rights.**

What Advocacy CAN Do

- Help you **share your views** in meetings
 - Explain things in a way that makes sense to you
 - Help you **feel more confident** speaking up
 - Make sure adults **listen to what matters to you**
 - Support you to understand your options
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What Advocacy CAN'T Do

- Make decisions *for* you
- Force you to say or do anything
- Change decisions on their own
- Take sides with parents, school, or professionals
- Promise that everything will go your way

 Advocates are **independent** — they are there for *you*, not to make choices for you.

Simple Way to Think About It

An advocate is like:

“Someone who helps you speak, be heard, and understand what’s happening — but *you* are still in charge.”