

Advocacy

Self-advocacy



Self-advocacy is the ability to express one's needs and desires. And, the ability to find and make decisions about the supports necessary to meet those needs.

In the past, self-advocacy was a term applied mostly to adults with disabilities. Today, the term is used more broadly to include teenagers and younger children. The ability to self-advocate is important for children to learn in order to be successful at all stages of their lives. Parents are encouraged to support their children to learn these skills. As a parent, you know your child best. It has been your role to make decisions and advocate for your child's needs. However, as children get older, and begin to transition into adulthood, they will need to advocate for themselves to the best of their ability. In order to do this, they should know their strengths and weaknesses as well as what type of supports they need to thrive and succeed. And, most important, young people need to feel confident about speaking up for what they want and know how to ask for help.

Self-advocacy can help children in school and other areas of their lives. Parents can help their child develop the skill of self-advocacy at any age. Parents can begin in small ways. For example, encouraging and allowing their children to make choices, and talking about the supports they need to be successful. Teaching children how to self-advocate will help them develop skills necessary for success throughout their lives.

Family TIES of Massachusetts provides information, referral, and parent to parent support for families of children with special health needs or disability and their professional partners. We also provide information about Early Intervention (EI) and maintain a complete list of EI Programs in Massachusetts.

The information provided on the back page of this sheet is not a complete list of the resources that may be available. For information about community based programs, resources and local support groups, please call your Regional Coordinator or our toll-free line 800-905-TIES (8437).

We publish an annual *Directory of Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Special Needs*. The Directory is always listed as the first place to look for resources on our Topic Sheets!

Call us if you would like a copy of the directory mailed to you. A pdf version of the directory is available to download on our website www.massfamilyties.org. You can also find the phone number for the Family TIES Regional Coordinator for your area on our website.



Information and Resources

Family TIES Resource Directory:

- Under *Advocacy*

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Programs

- Health Transition for Youth & Young Adults Tip Sheets for Parents
<https://www.mass.gov/health-transition-for-youth-and-young-adults-with-special-health-needs>

Other Massachusetts State Agency Programs:

- Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-developmental-disabilities-council>

Federation for Children with Special Needs:

- The Link Center
<https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/home/youth-development-leadership/>

Statewide:

- Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong
<https://ma-advocates.org/?s=>
- ARC of Massachusetts
<https://thearcofmass.org/programs>
- Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change
<http://www.mfofc.org/>
- Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)
<http://ppal.net/>
- Easter Seals Youth Leadership Network
<https://www.easterseals.com/ma/our-programs/youth-services/>

National:

- Kids as Self-Advocates (KASA)
<https://www.fvkasa.org/resources/index.php>
- The ARC of the U.S.
<https://www.thearc.org/>
- Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered
<https://www.sabeusa.org/>
- Pacer Center
<https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c95.pdf>