**How to Advocate for your child at school**

## What it means to advocate.

You may feel like you have to be confident and know everything about advocating for your child, but to “advocate” just means speaking up if you have concerns and/or learning how to be involved. The more involved you are the better your child will do.

## It’s OK to speak up.

You might not see it as your place to get involved in your child’s education. It might feel like your overstepping. But it’s OK to speak up if you’re worried. It’s not disrespectful to share your concerns. Teachers want kids to do well and open communication with parents helps make their job easier.

## Write down your thoughts.

If you are nervous about going into a meeting, it helps to write down what you want to talk about ahead of time. Being prepared and knowing what you want to say ahead of time can make the conversation easier.

## Start by talking with someone you trust.

If you have a good relationship with your child’s teacher, start the conversation there.  If talking to the teacher doesn’t feel comfortable, look for someone else you trust to help you think through what to do. Consider bringing a friend or relative who can take notes for you and help you stay organized and on track.

## Ask as many questions as you need to.

Make sure you understand what’s happening at your school. If you’re worried about specific things, ask about them. There are No wrong questions.

## Don’t be afraid to show emotion — but always be respectful.

Speaking up about your child is emotional. It’s hard to talk about what worries you, especially in front of strangers. It’s OK to get emotional. It’s even OK to cry. But try not to make things personal or lash out. It makes it harder for people to help you when they’re feeling attacked. \*You catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

## Ask about help for your child.

Find out what to do [if your child is falling behind](https://www.understood.org/articles/en/my-child-is-falling-behind-in-school-now-what). Don’t be afraid to ask for help and ask how you can help. Remember to keep a [communication log](https://www.understood.org/articles/en/download-school-communication-log)to keep track of who you spoke to and when.

## Keep speaking up.

Advocating for your child is not a one-time thing.

If you don’t speak up who will?