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TIPS TO EMPOWER

PARENTS TO BECOME EFFECTIVE ADVOCATES



MILITARY CAREGIVING
Military Families Learning Network

Helping parents and guardians focus on five advocacy strategies can empower them to be more effective!

1. SHARE INFORMATION & ASK QUESTIONS

Parents/guardians can get to know those working with their child and ask clarifying questions in a respectful and calm way (Morin, n.d.). Answers to questions will help propagate additional discussion and guide advocacy.

2. MAINTAIN A RECORD & ORGANIZE ALL COMMUNICATION

Parents/guardians should keep an organized notebook of all their child's special education paperwork and maintain a communication log to track progress and documentation.

3. LEARN IMPORTANT TERMS RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD

Terms in special education can cause confusion and misinterpretation. Parents can arm themselves by understanding and clarifying terms pro-actively.

4. TALK TO PROFESSIONALS ABOUT TRANSITION PLANS

Parents/guardians can contribute to the transition process by advocating for career assessment and access to transition programs for their child. Career assessments can help identify students' aptitudes and abilities, allowing parents/guardians and schools to plan realistic future coursework (Levinson, E.M. & Palmer, E.J., 2005).

5. BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THEIR RIGHTS & THAT OF THEIR CHILDREN

Parents/guardians should know their child's rights under the Individual's with Disabilities Act (IDEA). IDEA is legislation that ensures students with a disability are provided with Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs.

REFERENCES

Levinson, E.M. & Palmer, E.J., (2005). Preparing Students with Disabilities for School-to-Work Transition and Postschool Life. Retrieved on February 17, 2018.

Morin, A. (n.d.). 10 Ways to Be an Effective Advocate for Your Child at School. Retrieved on February 17, 2018.

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