

OPENING DISCUSSION:

WHAT **RESERVATIONS/CHALLENGES** HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WITH SELF-ADVOCACY?

1. Why self-advocacy is critical for your child's success.

2. How you can teach and model selfadvocacy skills.

3. Practical tools and resources to support your child's educational journey.



WHAAT IS WHAAT IS NHAAT OCACY? SELF-ADVOCACY?

Self-Advocacy is the ability to articulate one's needs and make informed decisions about the support necessary to meet those needs. Having self-advocacy skills allows children to understand themselves, their needs, and how to communicate them.

Self-Advocacy can look different for every child across every age group and requires many different skills.

Some skills required for successful selfadvocacy can include

- self-awareness
- confidence
- personal boundaries
- problem-solving
- emotion management
- communication



SELF-ADVOCACY IN ACTION: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

ASKING

FOR HELP

"It hurt my feelings when you took my toy"

SPEAKING

UP

"I need a break from this activity." "I can't see the board and I need to move to the front."

"I don't understand this problem, can you help me?"

STATING PREFERENCES

"I am not comfortable in this room, can I go to another one?"

"I want mustard instead of ketchup."

SELF-AWARENESS

YOUR CHILD HAS TO BE AWARE OF WHAT THEY NEED. AS WELL AS THEIR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

CONFIDENCE

WHEN YOU'RE CONFIDENT, YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO EXPRESS YOURSELF CLEARLY AND ASSERTIVELY, WHICH INCREASES THE CHANCES OF BEING HEARD

PROBLEM IDENTIFYING AND SOLVING

WHEN YOUR CHILD KNOWS <u>WHY</u> THEY ARE SELF-ADVOCATING OR <u>WHAT</u> THEY SELF-ADVOCATE FOR IT HELPS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S WRONG, HOW TO ADDRESS IT, AND WHAT STEPS TO TAKE TO IMPROVE YOUR SITUATION

COMMUNICATION

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION EMPOWERS YOU TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF AND TO NAVIGATE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS WHERE YOUR RIGHTS OR NEEDS MAY NOT BE IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED

SKILLS NEEDED FOR SELF-ADVOCACY

SELF ADVOCACY ACROSS LEVELS



SELF-ADVOCACY: PRIMARY

YOUNGER STUDENTS WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING AND DEMONSTRATION OF SELF-ADVOCACY. HERE IS WHAT SELF ADVOCACY COULD LOOK LIKE AT THIS AGE (K-5).

> ALLOWING THEM TO MAKE CHOICES AND DECISIONS "DO YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH BLOCKS OR PLAYDOUGH" "I WANT BLOCKS"

> > EXPRESSING NEEDS "I NEED TO GO POTTY"

<u>SETTING BOUNDARIES</u> "I DON'T WANT TO SHARE MY TOYS"



SELF-ADVOCACY: SECONDARY

AT THIS STAGE, SELF-ADVOCACY BECOMES ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT AS STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE MORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR EDUCATION AND PREPARE FOR LIFE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL.

> UNDERSTANDING NEEDS: RECOGNIZING PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES ""I LEARN BETTER WITH VISUAL AIDS"

> > PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS CONTRIBUTING TO IEP OR 504 PLAN DISCUSSIONS.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY EMAILING TEACHERS ABOUT CONCERNS OR ADVOCATING FOR NEEDS RESPECTFULLY.

SELF-ADVOCACY IN IEP/504 PLANS

Students should knowledgable of what is in their IEP/504 plans, such as extra time, fidget items, preferrential seating, cool down periods, assistive technology so that they can speak up for themselves in the event they are not receiving these things

While it is essential for staff to be reviewing these plans, having the confidence and ability to self-advocate will protect students when their plans are not being adequately implemented.



WHY SHOULD WE SELF-ADVOCATE?

Self-advocacy is an important social skill that can help children to

Navigate social interactions with peers and adults

Build confidence, self-esteem, problem-solving. and communication skills

Develop independence and become more selfreliant

Be better prepared for the future.

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY

We want to help our students utilize important skills in their daily lives, but first we must each them how to do so! Here are some ways you can teach your student self-advocacy

DEFINE IT

Ask your student what self-advocacy means to them, find a definition that is clear to understand and remember.

FIND AREAS TO ADVOCATE

Identify what areas your student needs assistance selfadvocating in (ex: math, science, peer interactions)

ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION

Talk through situations or scenarios where your student can self advocate, or experiences where they did self-advocate

TEACHING SELF-ADVOCACY: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE



Role-playing is a fantastic way to help your child practice self-advocacy in a safe and supportive environment.

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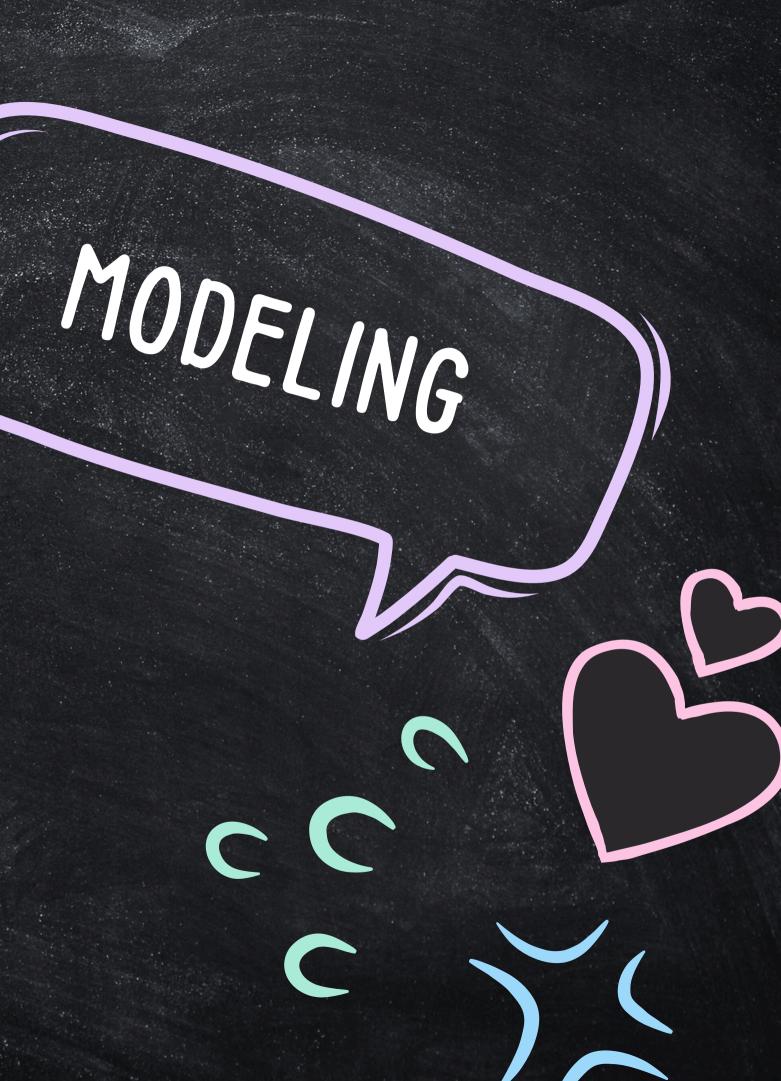
Set the Scene: Choose a real-life scenario your child might encounter

Assign Roles: You play the role of the teacher or peer, and your child practices being the selfadvocate.

Use Simple Scripts: Provide your child with language they can use.

Children learn by watching you. Modeling self-advocacy is one of the most powerful ways to teach your child. Children often learn by observing the behaviors and attitudes of the adults in their lives. Here are a few ways you can demonstrate effective self-advocacy

- Show Respectful Communication
- Be Open About Your Own Needs
- Highlight Problem-Solving
- Acknowledge Emotions





Many children struggle with self-advocacy because they don't know what to say or how to say it. As parents, we can help by providing them with clear, simple language to express their needs.

Teach Key Phrases:

- me to focus here."
- down.

Use Sentence Starters: • 'l feel ____ because ____.' 'I need help with ____ because ____.' • 'I learn best when ___.'

• 'Can I sit in a quieter area? It's hard for

• 'I need more time to finish this assignment because it takes me longer to write things

It is always important to provide consistent support and reinforcement when you are helping your student to self-advocate. Reinforcement helps to increase a behavior, so the more you applaud your student's attempts to self-advocate, the more they will do it!

When your student shares a time they are self-advocating, let them know how important it is and how proud you are.



IN CONCLUSION

In conclusion, self-advocacy is an essential skill for students to develop, empowering them to take charge of their own learning and well-being. By fostering self-awareness, communication, and problem-solving, we can help students build confidence and resilience. Encouraging self-advocacy not only supports academic success but also prepares students for future challenges in life. When students feel equipped to advocate for themselves, they gain a sense of agency and control, paving the way for greater achievement and personal growth.

REFLECTION

HOW DID THE PRESENTATION CHANGE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SELF-ADVOCACY?

2. WHAT IS ONE STRATEGY YOU CAN IMPLEMENT WHEN **TEACHING YOUR STUDENT SELF-ADVOCACY?**

3. WHAT ARE THE KEY SKILLS OR TECHNIQUES FOR SELF-ADVOCACY THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU DURING THE PRESENTATION?

RESOURCES https://www.fortbendisd.com/specialeducation <u>Self-Advocacy In Academics Visuals and Scripts</u> Explicit Instruction of Self-Advocacy Skills <u>Self Advocacy (Visual Explanation) - EL/SE</u> <u>Self-Advocacy Video For Primary Teaching</u> <u>Self-Advocacy Video For Secondary Teaching</u> State Self-Self Advocacy Resources



QUESTIONS?

