

## General Advocacy Tips

*“To advocate means to ‘speak in favor of’ or ‘argue for a cause on another’s behalf’ – it means to fight for your children, to defend them. So you should feel good about your role as your child’s advocate. “ ~ Gabriella Celeste*

1. **Get the Facts:** Always get all the information you can about what happened. Ask your child as many questions as you can think of about the situation. Write down everything your child tells you.
2. **Make a “Paper Trail”:** Get a folder, envelope or box that you use to can keep any papers about your child. Save any papers the schools sends you or send home with your child. These papers are VERY important.
3. **Create a “Contact Log”:** Keep track of every person you call, what day you called them, what time you call them and what they tell you. Make sure you get the full name, position, and phone number of anyone you talk to. Write information on one sheet of paper and put the paper in your child’s folder.
4. **Make Friends in High Places:** Find out the names of the people in charge of your child’s school and school district. Don’t be afraid to ask to talk to the principal, the superintendent, or a member of the school board.
5. **Put it in Writing:** When an employee of the school tells you any piece of important information, ask them to put it in writing. For example, if the principal tells you, “We think your child is too much trouble and would be better off in another school,” say, “could you please put that in writing?” If they will not put it in writing, send them a letter summarizing what they said and thanking them for speaking with you.
6. **Keep your Cool:** Chances are that someone will make you very mad during this process. You have every right to be upset. Use your anger to be strong and clear and you will have a better chance of getting what you want. If you get angry and curse someone out, you may make the situation worse.

