

Advocacy "Sound" Advice

Deaf children have a right to learn to listen and speak! Deaf children have a right to attend and be fully included in their community school. You can make it happen!

In order to become an effective advocate for your child, you must first educate yourself. Attend monthly VOICE chapter meetings where you will learn from presenters and other families how to better advocate for your child. Never feel like you are "asking" for too many services and/or accommodations for your child...access to information is the basic human right of every student and access is where inclusion begins!

YOU must help educators/coaches/instructors understand the impact of hearing loss on your child's development in all areas. Get to know your SEAC representative because you will want to inform them of any challenges / hurdles / needs your child is experiencing in their educational program.

If your child's school board does not have a VOICE SEAC representative, you may want to consider filling this much needed position. Attend SEAC meetings for information about what is happening in Special Education at your child (ren)'s school board.

- Review and learn the educational acronyms as described by VOICE ABC's to educational acronyms.
- Refer to the VOICE IEP Parent Guide when collaborating with your child's school in the development of your child's Individual Education Plan.
- Be sure your child's classroom has been acoustically assessed by a qualified Educational Audiologist and that accommodations are in place. Also refer to the helpful VOICE RAMPS document available for download from the VOICE website at www.voicefordeafkids.com
- Ensure that your child is equipped with the necessary audiological equipment to access information (i.e. personal FM system, captioned videos).
- When planning for transitions (i.e. end/start of school year, entering and leaving preschool, elementary and high school), request mini-case conferences, inviting all those who know your child and can advocate for your child to participate

- Determine early in the school year, the preferred mode of communication with your child's teacher (e.g. email, telephone, notes in the agenda).
- Arrange mutually agreeable times to meet and discuss your child's progress. Request a complete set of text books, your child is using in all subjects, for pre-viewing and for follow-up teaching at home.
- Plot your child's unaided audiogram on a "Familiar sounds audiogram" to demonstrate the severity and impact of hearing loss on verbal/language development. Show this audiogram to whoever has contact with your child.
- Use a weekly "communication sheet" to be completed by classroom/Itinerant teacher for pre-teaching of vocabulary. Sheet can be completed in hard copy or electronically.
- When you don't have the answer to a problem know there are professionals in the community who can help. Call the Central VOICE office, talk to your child's Itinerant Teacher, AVT, SEAC representative and/or other VOICE families.

VOICE

FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN