

## Help for Your Family fact sheet

# Advocating for your child



**It's common for parents to advocate for their child in many situations, even though you might not think of it as advocacy.**

### What is advocacy?

Advocacy is speaking up for the needs and rights of others.

As a parent, you have already been advocating for your child since they were born because you have their best interests at heart. If you have a strong instinct about what could improve your child's situation, it's ok to be firm and persistent to make this happen. Remember that you know your child best, and you don't have to apologise for speaking up.

Advocating for your child isn't always easy. It may mean developing new skills, learning new words and asking lots of questions. But with persistence and the right support, advocating for your child can help you work towards positive outcomes for your child and family.

### What is advocacy support?

Advocacy support is where someone helps you to advocate for the needs of your child and family, or takes up a matter on your behalf. You can get advocacy support from friends, family, other parents or professional advocates.

### What type of advocacy does ACD provide?

#### ACD Support Line

This is a **free** telephone advocacy service for all Victorian families raising children with developmental delay and disability from birth to 18.

We can help you by:

- Listening to your concerns
- Providing information about your child's rights
- Helping you get ready for meetings with childcare, school or the NDIS
- Planning next steps to advocate for your child
- Connecting you with a wide range of resources and information

Open Monday – Friday 9 am to 5 pm.  
Interpreters are available.

**Call the ACD Support Line on 03 9880 7000  
or 1800 654 013 (regional).**

## Tips for advocating for your child

There can be many different situations where you may need to advocate for your child. Here are some tips from other families who have successfully advocated for their child and family:

### Be prepared

- Be clear about what you want to achieve and what is an acceptable outcome
- Be aware of your child's rights
- Find out who is responsible for the outcome you are seeking
- Don't always expect conflict, as others may agree with you

### Communicate clearly

- Be firm and persistent
- Think about what you want to say and how you will say it
- Write down the main points you want to cover
- Think about points that others may raise and how you might respond
- Agree on an appropriate time and place for any discussion
- Stay focused on getting the best outcome for your child
- Ask for a few minutes to gather your thoughts
- Try to stay calm and use respectful language

### Get support

- Ask a friend, support person or advocate to help you
- Seek further information and advice from an advocacy organisation

### Follow up actions

- Be open to other solutions that may be just as effective
- Negotiate and be open to compromise
- Keep notes about what was discussed
- Follow up on agreed actions

## What other organisations provide advocacy support?

Disability Advocacy Finder  
<https://askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder>

DARU: Find an Advocate  
[www.daru.org.au/find-an-advocate](http://www.daru.org.au/find-an-advocate)

Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS)  
[www.yacvic.org.au/ydas](http://www.yacvic.org.au/ydas)

### Free services for families

- Support Line
- Workshops
- Information
- Peer support

