KIIND SNAPSHOTS

Learn about the various forms of advocacy support available for your child

There are a number of different types of advocacy support? Some may become more useful as your child gets older and they begin to navigate new aspects of their life.

An advocate is someone who is 'on your team'. They will stand by you and work towards the best outcome for your child and your family.

They can attend meetings with you, make phone calls on your behalf and assist you to write emails, letters and documents. An advocate can also help you to liaise with the NDIS, Centrelink, education providers and, if required, assist with appeal applications.

Advocacy organisations also lobby for positive changes in the community.

Self-advocacy: Self-advocacy refers to the ability of your child to speak up and advocate effectively for themselves, their rights and their interests. It is an important skill to develop for those with capacity and there are a number of organisations that provide education and training to assist people with disabilities to develop their self-advocacy skills.

Individual advocacy: Individual advocates may be family members, friends or professional, independent advocates. The role of an individual advocate is to work closely with the person they are supporting, to understand their needs and preferences, and to help them access the services and support they require. This can involve helping the person navigate complex systems and processes, such as healthcare, the NDIS, legal or social services, and advocating on their behalf to ensure they are treated fairly and with respect.

Peer advocacy: Peer advocacy is provided by people with lived experience of a particular issue, including other parents of a child with disability. Peer advocacy can be particularly effective because those doing the advocating have first-hand experience with the issues at hand and can speak from personal knowledge and experience.

Citizen advocacy involves development of long-term, one-to-one relationships between a vulnerable person and a volunteer advocate from the community. Citizen advocates provide friendship and act as a mentor and/or spokesperson to ensure that the voice of the person they support is heard and their needs are met. Citizen advocacy has many benefits, including increased social connections, improved quality of life and greater community engagement for vulnerable people.

Legal advocacy: Legal advocacy involves representing individuals or groups in legal proceedings, such as court cases, tribunals and mediation. This type of advocacy is typically provided by lawyers or legal services.

Systemic advocacy: Systemic advocacy seeks to bring about change to policies, laws, and practices that impact on the lives of individuals or groups. It involves identifying and addressing the underlying causes of problems and promoting systemic change through policy development, research, and lobbying.

You can locate advocates that provide various forms of advocacy via the Useful Organisations directory on the Kind website (kiind.com.au/find-useful-organisations).



Need help to navigate the world of disability?

Speak with one of our knowledgeable Peer Navigators for practical guidance, information and support.

kiind.com.au

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