

Learning to be your child's best advocate

There will be times throughout your child's life when you will feel the need to step in and advocate on their behalf.

The following steps may help to stay focused on issue(s) at hand.

1

Articulate the issue

Make sure you fully understand the issue and are able to clearly articulate it to your intended audience.

2

Be clear about what you want

Think carefully about what you want for your child. Gather as much information as you can to make an informed decision and if you belong to a peer support group, it may be helpful to seek the opinions of others in similar situations. It's important, however, to keep an open mind because there may be solutions that you haven't yet considered.

3

Present a solution, not a problem!

Presenting a solution is a faster and more effective method of reaching an acceptable conclusion.

4

Know your child's rights

Find out who you need to speak to and what you can expect. This will save you hours of frustration having to reiterate your concerns to different people. You'll also be a more confident and effective advocate if you [know your child's rights](#) and the rules of the system within which you're operating.

You can find [relevant legislation](#) regarding your child's rights under the 'Be heard' section of the Kiind website.

5

Keep a record and be prepared

It's important to be prepared and keep records of all meetings that you attend. Come prepared with questions that you would like to ask, and take plenty of notes, including details such as the timeline of activities, the people who you spoke to and the outcomes of the meeting. Keep all this together, along with any other communications that happened outside the meeting, such as emails and phone calls.

This will help save you time and frustration in the future, particularly if you need to reiterate the situation to many people, or if your child's specialist is no longer available.

6

Stay calm

Staying calm and polite is likely to facilitate a more productive discussion. If you're struggling to stay calm, ask for a moment so you can calm down and gather your thoughts. If this doesn't work, you could ask for a short break, or stop the meeting and arrange another appointment.

7

Get support

Speaking to other parents who've had similar experiences or joining a support group such as the [Kiind Families Facebook Network](#) can help you with useful information and emotional support.

8

Bring support

Take a supporter with you such as a friend, family member or an advocate.

Want to find more advocacy supports?

Take a look at Kiind's [Useful Organisations](#) directory and find options under the 'advocacy' category

kiind.com.au

Phone (08) 6164 9806

Email support@kiind.com.au

