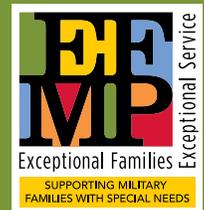


Preparing to Succeed at Positive Advocacy



Advocating effectively for a loved one with special needs requires skills to make appropriate decisions, solve problems and set goals for the future. Begin by learning about the special need and how it may affect a person's ability to learn, behave and perform. Next, consider the following approaches to success in your role as an advocate:

Seek information and assistance from others

- Who has information that is helpful?
- What resources or support organizations are available? There are many organizations for particular medical or educational needs. (Search <http://www.parentcenterhub.org>.)

Identify yourself with an advocacy group

- Is there an advocacy organization for your particular situation?
- Can you attend a course on advocacy?

Master the vocabulary associated with the special need

- Who has the information necessary for you to become familiar with terminology associated with the special need?
- What terminology do service agencies or providers use?

Share problems or issues and seek support from family and friends

- Who is available to share information?
- Who is understanding and provides support?

Rely on positive people

- What friends and individuals in the community are encouraging and sympathetic?
- What organizations are available to help in the development of positive, supportive relationships?

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships/special-needs>

Make short-term or daily goals

- How can tasks be broken down into more manageable steps?
- What assistance can help you accomplish goals or tasks?

Think positively

- What are your loved one's strengths, skills and abilities? What about your own?
- How can daily life be improved?
- How can positive thinking skills be developed and practiced?

Be positive in your interactions with others

- Who provides additional physical and emotional support?
- How can you show understanding and appreciation for their efforts?

Accept and deal with feelings of frustration, disappointment and anger

- What are the most productive ways to deal with the emotions associated with the special need?
- What support is available to help with negative feelings?

Take time for self-care

- What steps are necessary to ensure sufficient rest and nutrition?
- Are programs available to support good health?

Resources: Center for Parent Information and Resources (<http://www.parentcenterhub.org>)

Exceptional Family Member Program support is available for military families with special needs.

For more information, please contact your installation EFMP office or visit

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships/special-needs>, an official Department of Defense website.