



DSAL Youth Advocacy Forum

Top Ten Tips for Advocates

1. Be an advocate not an adversary.
2. Know your audience. Everyone has a unique perspective and you need to understand the perspective of the person you are dealing with.
3. Give this person credit and praise for every great idea (even if it started out as yours).
4. Be ready, willing and able to provide as much information as is necessary to follow through with the idea or request.
5. Put important requests in writing and provide a timeline.
6. Allow a reasonable time for requests to be processed, and then follow up with phone calls and letters.
7. Bring a friend, family member or fellow advocate to appointments and meetings when you need someone to take notes, bear witness or just be there for emotional support.
8. Before a meeting or appointment, prepare a list of the points you need to make and the questions you need to ask. Also, plan your responses to any questions or comments that you can anticipate. It's easier to stay calm if you are not caught off guard.
9. If you get what you want (which won't always happen even if you are a great advocate) express gratitude. This is true even if the person should have done it without your intervention. Everyone responds to appreciation.
10. Remember that advocacy is something we all do every day. Sometimes the issues are national, sometimes they are personal, but they are always important because they are about people.