



The Savvy Parent's Guide to Advocacy: Why the Squeaky Wheel Doesn't Always Get the Grease!

Advocating for your child isn't about being the loudest voice in the room; it's about fostering collaboration, trust, and shared goals with the school team. The old saying that "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" doesn't always hold true when it comes to getting the best support for your child. Instead, effective advocacy is a blend of preparation, patience, and partnership. Use these six steps to build a positive, productive relationship with your school team, so you can all work together to help your child succeed:

1. Build Bridges, Not Battlefields

Advocacy is a team sport! Rather than focusing on being "the squeaky wheel," invest in positive relationships with school staff. A friendly approach and open communication can go a long way toward creating allies for your child.

2. Come Prepared and Stay Collaborative

A prepared parent is a respected parent. Bring organized documents, ask thoughtful questions, and stay on topic. This lets the school team see you as a proactive partner, not just another noisy wheel.

3. Set the Tone with Appreciation

Recognize the school team's efforts to support your child. A little gratitude can grease the wheels better than complaints—plus, it encourages everyone to work harder for your child's success.

4. Focus on Solutions, Not Just Problems

Approach challenges with a "how can we solve this together?" attitude. When you're seen as collaborative and solution-oriented, the school team will feel more willing to invest their energy in finding what works for your child.

5. Follow Up with Purpose

After meetings, follow up with a polite, clear summary of agreed-upon actions and timelines. Rather than repeated check-ins that feel like nagging, this approach reinforces your commitment and keeps everyone on the same page.

6. Invest in Relationships for Long-Term Success

Advocacy is a marathon, not a sprint. Take time to know the team, understand their perspective, and show you're there to support them as they support your child. When you invest in positive relationships, everyone's more likely to keep your child's needs in focus.