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**Participant Handout**

**My Rights and  
Responsibilities as a Parent  
Advocacy through Partnerships**

Developed by:  
Rhonda Logsdon, Kentucky Special Parent Information  
Network (KY SPIN); Nancy Lovett, Calloway County  
Regional Training Center (RTC);  
& Brenda Mullins, Kentucky Early Childhood Transition  
Project (KECTP)



**TRAINING SERIES**

***Supporting Transition and School Readiness***

## **My Rights and Responsibilities as a Parent: Advocacy through Partnerships**

Parents are natural advocates for their children -  
You know your child better than anyone else does

Our emotions and experiences shape the way we approach advocacy

### **Steps to Advocate for your child:**

- \_\_\_\_\_: Gather facts and information; speak with other families who have been there; contact agencies/organizations; learn everything you can
- \_\_\_\_\_: What are rules and guidelines; learn who the “go to” person is; follow the appropriate steps; know what the process is if you do not agree
- \_\_\_\_\_: Planning prevents problems; write down ideas and suggestions; ask for help if you need it; have samples and recommendations from others; decide exactly what it is you want accomplished
- \_\_\_\_\_: Create a binder; keep a phone log; create a paper trail; put all request in writing; have any policies, procedures, guidelines provided to you in writing; if it’s not in writing it may not be provided to your child
- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_: If you do not ask you will not know; no question is a dumb question; actively listen and do not make prejudgments; ask questions in a way to get the answer you want:
  - \* Open ended questions: requires explanation
  - \* Close ended questions: yes or no
- \_\_\_\_\_: Make a list and prioritize based on your child’s needs; Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How this effects your child; define and describe issue from all angles; be proactive versus reactive; develop strategies; don’t spend your time looking to blame someone

- \_\_\_\_\_: Build partnerships; you are an important part of the team; communicate your needs and desires for your child; you will not always agree with one another; if you feel overwhelmed or upset step away from the situation/meeting
- \_\_\_\_\_: Offer ways to address issues; be an active part of the solutions; provide documentation and proven methods; offer suggestions and ways to address the issue (such as we do this at home and it works)
- \_\_\_\_\_: Work as equals in collaborating on behalf of your child; it takes work to develop partnership. Ask yourself “What can I do to make a difference in my child’s life”; the key to any successful partnership is communication; In any partnership it is important to follow through with what you promise to do; Allow yourself to dream for yourself and your child.
- \_\_\_\_\_: Access parent support groups in your area (e.g., PTA); contact organizations/agencies who can help you (e.g., FRYSC); meet/talk with families similar to yours at school, doctors’ offices, etc. Organizations that maintain support group lists include:
  - KY Autism Training Center (KATC) support groups list: <https://louisville.edu/education/kyautismtraining/resources/family-guide> ,
  - Opportunities for Family Leadership (OFL) has a list of parent support groups <http://mhmr.ky.gov/mhsas/OFL.asp>
  - KY-SPIN has a list of Family Support Groups at [http://www.kyspin.com/family\\_support\\_groups.cfm](http://www.kyspin.com/family_support_groups.cfm)

## **Remember....**

- Building a strong partnership will help you effectively advocate for your child!
- Your child is depending on you to be his/her advocate in education and in life. Take time to become a lifelong learner and discover with other families ways to support one another.

## Check out these resources for information about advocacy and more...

- *Working Together: A Parent's Guide to Parent and Professional Partnership and Communication Within Special Education* (PACER)  
<http://www.taalliance.org/publications/pdfs/ALL51.pdf>
- *Introducing Your Child to the School Community Using a "Student Snapshot" Format* (PACER)  
<http://www.pacer.org/webinars/planninginclusion/IntroducingYourChildtotheSchoolCommunity.pdf>
- *Communicating with Your Child's School Through Letter Writing* (NICHCY)  
<http://www.nichcy.org/InformationResources/Documents/NICHCY%20PUBS/pa9.pdf>
- *Steps to Success: Communicating with Your Child's School* (NICHCY & CADRE)  
<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/pdf/Steps%20to%20Success.pdf>



## **NOTES...**

This is Module 7a in *The ENGAGEMENT Training Series for Kentucky Families & Professionals: Supporting Transition and School Readiness*. The modules in this training series were developed by content experts across the Commonwealth. The series is a collaborative effort among the developers, reviewers, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Kentucky Regional Training Centers (RTC), and the Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project (KECTP). Replication of materials was paid for with State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) funds.

## **Module 7a: My Rights & Responsibilities as a Parent: Advocating through Partnerships**

*The ENGAGEMENT Training Series for Kentucky Families & Professionals*

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