

ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF IS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT LETS OTHERS KNOW THAT EVERYONE, INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, HAS RIGHTS.

When you become a self-advocate, it helps others understand that you are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity. This is the best way to express your needs and to have your voice be heard.

It is essential to your health and well-being that you have a clear understanding of the things that are important to you. To accomplish this, you must develop strong self-advocacy skills. Take time to identify your strengths and weaknesses. You will need to determine what things you can accomplish on your own and what day-to-day tasks that may require additional assistance or support. Be prepared to identify exactly what you need, who to ask, and how to ask for what you need.

Disability Rights Florida was founded in 1977 as the designated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system for individuals with disabilities in the State of Florida. The P&A system exists to ensure the safety, well-being, and success of people with disabilities.

Disability Rights
FLORIDA
ADVOCACY. EQUALITY. DIGNITY.

Disability Rights Florida is a non-profit organization funded by a variety of sources. For a complete list of funders, go to www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/funders. The information provided herein does not constitute legal representation or advice.

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Ten Steps to Effective Self-Advocacy

Self-Advocacy Information for People with Disabilities

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Ten Steps to Effective Self-Advocacy

1 Prioritize Your Needs
What are your goals in self-advocacy? Your answers to those questions will help you decide your next steps.

2 Know Your Rights
It is your right to understand the laws, that determine your rights. You also have the right to receive information in your primary language and in alternative formats.

3 Keep Records
It is vital that you keep accurate records. Be sure to keep important documents, in one safe place.

4 Prepare and Plan
Before a meeting, reflect on your needs, review your documents, and talk with people you trust to help you prepare.

5 Be Creative and Assertive
Make sure you keep your discussion short and to the point. Share when you disagree and collaborate to find the best solution for you.

6 Get Decisions in Writing
Keep track of your progress through documentation. If you disagree with a decision, ask for it in writing.

7 Right to Appeal
If you do not get a decision that you agree with, you have the right to challenge it.

8 Interim Solutions
While you wait for a decision to be made on your case, consider other options by exploring what resources are available to help you in the meantime.

9 Confirm Sign Documents
Review all agreements and action items to ensure everyone involved are on the same page, and sign only what you agree to.

10 Follow Up and Thank
Stay on top of any final deadlines and communications. Remember to thank those who have helped you in this process.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE 10 STEPS AT:
www.DisabilityRightsFlorida.org/10Steps

REQUEST ASSISTANCE
TOLL FREE: 800-342-0823
ONLINE: DisabilityRightsFlorida.org/intake

Services are free and confidential.