

# Six Steps to Effective Advocacy

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## Follow the chain of command

If you need help advocating for your child, these are general guidelines for getting the process started. If you are unsure as to the procedure to follow, check your division's website as they may have an organizational chart or concern procedure posted.

### 1. Meet with the teacher

- If you have concerns, first **discuss** them directly with the person involved (in person if possible).
- Follow-up by email summarizing the conversation and next steps.

### 2. Contact the principal

- If you're unable to work out an agreeable resolution with the teacher, next contact the principal for support and mediation.
- Contact them by **email**, or follow-up with an email, summarizing the conversation and next steps.

### 3. Contact your school support team

- Seek input from your child's school support team.
- This team may include a school psychologist, resource teacher, guidance counsellor, or social worker.
- These professionals are there to advocate for and support the students, so please do not hesitate to seek out their help and expertise.

### 4. Bring a friend or advocate

- It can be overwhelming and intimidating attending meetings with a room full of professionals.
- It can also be difficult to remember important details when you are feeling stressed or emotional.
- If you would like to bring a support person or advocate to any of the meetings, that is your right.

### 5. Contact the Assistant Superintendent

- If you have tried all of the steps above, you may wish to contact the principal's next-in-charge.
- This is usually someone in the division's senior administration, such as the Director of Student Services or Assistant Superintendent.
- Let them know what has worked well so far, and where issues remain, and express an interest in collaboration--working together to do what is in the best interest of your child.

### 6. Lastly, contact the Superintendent

- If you have made diligent efforts to work with the Director of Student Services and the Assistant Superintendent and you are still not satisfied, contact your division's **Superintendent**.
- As you will have been in contact with other divisional senior administration, it is likely they will have already been made aware of your concerns.



## Keep a record

- I suggest parents and caregivers keep a record of communication with school staff and other professionals when advocating for your child.
- This is to help parents keep contacts with professionals organized and to visualize the efforts parents are making on behalf of their children.

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## Please note:

- Record-keeping is not intended to be combative or confrontational, nor as a strategy to “catch” someone making a mistake.
- Good documentation will help you stay organized during a stressful time and may be important to reference in the future.

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## When more is needed:

If you feel you have reached your limit in terms of effective advocacy, or have exhausted all the options available to you, please do not hesitate to contact a professional advocate. If you are interested in my services, please email me.



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