

FAMILY TIPSHEET: SPEAKING UP



Email: Resourcecentre@hollandbloorview.ca

Advocating for yourself or your family can feel challenging, but it's an important skill that gets easier with practice. This tipsheet is a guide to help you navigate conversations effectively and ensure your voice is heard.

What Does Advocacy Look Like?

- Share Suggestions: Offer constructive ideas.
- Voice Concerns: Clearly express any issues.
- Ask Questions: Seek clarity and information.
- Make Requests: Clearly state what you need.






Tips for Effective Advocacy

- Show Respect: Approach conversations with respect. This encourages open dialogue and mutual respect.
- Stay Calm: Present your concerns or suggestions in a calm manner. People are more likely to listen when you're composed.
- Be Concise: Stick to 3-4 main points. Keep your message clear. You might say:
 - "I would like to suggest..."
 - "I would like to request..."
 - "I am concerned about... because..."
- Use Sensitivity or Humor: A light touch can help your message be received more positively.
- Be Solution-Oriented: Offer possible solutions and explain how they could improve the situation.
- Listen Actively: After presenting your points, be open to the other person's feedback. Invite discussion.
- Involve Others if Appropriate: If relevant, include the person involved in the conversation, but ensure you're comfortable with this.
- Express Gratitude: Thank the person for their time and assistance. A little appreciation goes a long way.
- Clarify Next Steps: End by confirming any follow-up actions and timelines. Ask when you can expect a response.



Remember: Advocacy is about treating others as you wish to be treated. Your voice is important, and by practicing these tips, you can help create a better environment for yourself and your family.

Helpful Resources

Resource	Description
Holland Bloorview: Advocacy Tool Kit 	Demonstrating how to apply advocacy skills to different situations throughout early childhood and adolescence
Inclusion Action in Ontario 	This article highlights tips for parents on being a persuasive advocate for students with disabilities.
March of Dimes Canada: Disability Advocacy Network 	March of Dimes Canada's Disability Advocacy Network is a national network where you can build the skills to advocate for yourself and speak out about the issues that matter to people with disabilities across Canada
Advocacy: How to Deal with Concerns at School 	This resource goes through the "pathway" on who to connect with while advocating for your child at school.
Advocating for your child in the Healthcare System 	This article goes through processes and tips for advocating for your child throughout the healthcare system.

Feel empowered to speak up and advocate for yourself and your family!

Last updated October 2024 by the Family Support Team and MSW Student
You can find more information like this in the Grocery Foundation Family Resource Centre
resourcecentre@hollandbloorview.ca