PROJECT ACCESS

Self-Advocacy

WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY

Self-advocacy means speaking up for yourself, asking for what you need, and making choices that support your well-being. It helps kids with autism express their thoughts, feelings, and needs in a way that others can understand.

TEACH THE LEARNER

1. Help Kids Know Themselves – Guide them in understanding their strengths, challenges, and what helps them succeed.
2. Encourage Self-Expression – Provide opportunities for kids to speak up about their needs, preferences, and feelings.
3. Model and Practice Asking for Help – Teach them how to request assistance by role-playing and providing real-life scenarios.
4. Foster Questioning Skills – Encourage kids to ask questions when something is unclear, promoting curiosity and problem-solving.
5. Teach Goal-Setting – Support kids in setting and working toward personal goals with clear steps and encouragement.
6. Build a Support Network – Help them identify trusted people (teachers, parents, friends) who can offer guidance and encouragement.
7. Promote Self-Care Awareness – Teach kids to recognize when they need rest, relaxation, or sensory breaks and how to communicate those needs.

BENEFITS

- Helps kids feel more confident and independent
- Improves communication skills
- Ensures needs are met at school, home, and in the community
- Encourages problem-solving and decision-making
- Builds self-esteem and empowerment

TOOLS TO SUPPORT SELF-ADVOCACY

- Visual supports (charts, schedules, communication cards)
- Social scripts to practice conversations
- Self-advocacy worksheets and goal-setting activities
- Apps for communication and organization
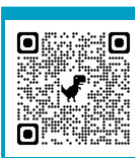
HOW TEACHERS CAN SUPPORT SELF-ADVOCACY

- Provide opportunities for decision-making
- Teach problem-solving and coping strategies
- Model self-advocacy skills in daily life

REMINDERS

Self-advocacy is a skill that takes time to develop. Practice and support can help kids with autism gain confidence in expressing themselves and getting their needs met!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Social Narratives

Visual Supports

Functional Communication Training

GET CONNECTED!