

INSPIRING POSSIBILITIES

Dropout Prevention: Three Ways Parents Can Help Their Youth with a Disability Stay in School

Youth with disabilities, especially those with emotional behavior disorders and learning disabilities, are at significantly greater risk of dropping out of school than are their peers without disabilities. Parents, however, can increase the likelihood that their youth will remain in school and graduate. Here are three ways you can help your child stay in school.

Stay Involved with Your Child

You and your extended family members have a tremendous influence on your son or daughter's desire to stay in school. It is important for you to talk frequently with your child about the importance of education. Let your youth know that you care about how he or she is doing in school. Help your child understand school rules and expectations. Support his or her learning styles, habits, and skills in ways that help him or her succeed.

Work with the School to Encourage Learning Success

You can work with the school in many ways to encourage your son or daughter's learning success. Help teachers understand your child's strengths and unique needs by communicating regularly. You could explore alternative school placements, assistive technology, extracurricular activities, and school modifications and accommodations. If your child is frustrated or discouraged with school, ask for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting to discuss his or her struggles and investigate options and solutions.

Encourage Success Outside of School

Youth who are engaged in extracurricular athletics and after-school activities are more likely to stay in school, according to education experts. The IEP team should discuss ways to include such activities in your son or daughter's IEP. You also may want to explore options outside of school, including volunteering, employment, mentoring relationships, youth groups, and community sports. Such activities can provide positive experiences that support success.