

April: Theme is “Advocacy Skills”

EDUCATION: What is advocacy?.....

Suggested audience: Elementary, middle, and high school students

Did you know that more than 50 percent of bullying situations will stop when a peer intervenes? That shows just how powerful your actions in looking out for someone else can be!

- Look up the term “**advocacy**”
- Look up the term “**self-advocacy**”

How do these terms apply to what students can do to prevent and address bullying for themselves or others?

Student Action Plan (Download and print the [Student Action Plan](#))

Ready to take action to address bullying? Maybe not sure how to start? As a student, bullying is something that impacts you, your peers, and your school — whether you’re the target of bullying, a witness, or the person who bullies. Bullying can end, but that won’t happen unless students, parents, and educators work together and take action.

Start by creating a plan that works for you and your situation. This student action plan is an opportunity for you — either on your own or with your parents and teachers — to develop a strategy to change what’s happening to you or someone else. It’s your chance to make a difference.

The plan includes three steps:

- **STEP 1:** Describe the bullying that’s happening. Include dates, location, who is involved, and details of the behavior.
- **STEP 2:** Describe what you would like done about it. Think about how the situation could be stopped or prevented.
- **STEP 3:** What steps can you take to make that happen? Include who could help, what they can do, and what you can do.

*Examples on page 2.**

INTERACTION: Project Connect.....

Suggested audience: ALL students

Project Connect joins students, schools, and communities to make a powerful statement about uniting against bullying. The process is simple. Students write a message about how they can make their school safe for students with disabilities on a strip of ORANGE construction paper.

- Create the strips (links) using sheets of 8 ½ x 11 ORANGE construction paper
- Cut into strips of 1 ½” to 2” wide and 11” long.
- The strips are then stapled or glued together, resulting in one long, connected chain that visually represents the power of uniting for a common cause.

The message is this: While one person can speak out against bullying, our message is much stronger when we come together to make a difference. It’s important to identify and include students with disabilities in the conversation.

View Project Connect online [here](#).

*Examples *(continued from page 1)*

<p>Step 1:</p> <p>Describe the bullying that’s happening. Include dates, location, who is involved, and details of the behavior.</p>	<p>Step 2:</p> <p>Describe what you would like done about it. Think about how the situation could be stopped or prevented.</p>	<p>Step 3:</p> <p>What steps can you take to make that happen? Include who could help, what they can do, and what you can do.</p>
<p align="center">Example One: Self- Advocacy</p> <p align="center">Kyla is a 10-year-old girl with Down syndrome. A classmate is making fun of her speech.</p>		
<p>Sometimes, when I talk, it can be hard to understand. When it happens, there is this kid named Jordan that imitates me, and he makes a big production out of it. He exaggerates my words and then makes sure that all his friends hear it, and a lot of them laugh. It really hurts and makes me wish I didn’t have to go to school.</p>	<p>I don’t want to get anyone in trouble, I just want him to stop. It’s hard when it feels like people are laughing at me because of something I can’t control. I want to say something to him but it’s not easy to do. I wish one of the other kids would stick up for me. Maybe I could talk with some of my friends and see if they would support me when this happens.</p>	<p>I am going to talk with my mom and ask her for her ideas. I am going to ask her if we can go to my teacher together and let her know what’s been happening. My friend Karla is someone who is always at my side. I am going to ask her if I can talk with her anytime when I’m feeling bad. When I feel ready, I want to prepare myself to say something to Jordan, but in the meantime I am going to remember that I have many people who care about me.</p>
<p align="center">Example Two: Advocacy</p> <p align="center">Nate is a 16-year-old boy who is tired of seeing his classmate, Jack, get harassed because of the way he walks.</p>		
<p>Sam keeps calling Jack a “spaz.” Everyone hears it, but nobody says anything. Sam thinks it’s funny. Jack does walk differently, but it’s because he has cerebral palsy, which affects how he moves.</p>	<p>Sam shouldn’t use that word because it’s offensive. I could talk with Jack about how he thinks I could help, or maybe I could ask our teacher to talk about how words can impact the way we view people. I can say something to Sam, but it would need to be something that wouldn’t make things worse for Jack. I could encourage others to say something, too. No one deserves to be treated that way.</p>	<p>I should talk with my guidance counselor and ask him what he thinks of my ideas. I could also ask him if there is anything we can do in class to show how much words can hurt others. If I can make a difference for Jack, then maybe others will figure out they can do something, too.</p>