What is ADVOCACY exactly?

Why does the term advocacy almost always summon an image of a negative confrontation? It doesn’t have to be this way.

The goal of advocacy is to communicate, empower, negotiate, mediate, or convey the needs and/or rights of a person or group of people. Usually parents assume this role on behalf of their high ability children, but gifted children can be effective spokespersons for themselves just as easily. All they need is coaching and practice.

Here are some tips to assist gifted learners in speaking up for themselves in the classroom.

1. Start small by teaching students how to address perceived grievances in the classroom. Often meeting privately with the educator is enough to smooth over a misunderstanding.

2. Assist students in clearly identifying the problem in neutral terms. The student should practice speaking in “I-messages” and clearly articulating how the problem impedes their learning in the classroom. It is helpful to ask the student to prioritize classroom issues into three categories—urgent, manageable, and can-wait.

3. After the problem statement has been formulated, help students carefully think about at least two solutions that would remedy the situation. Model for the student how to tactfully and positively express their concerns.

4. Remind students that everything they desire may not occur all at once, so it is wise for them to determine how much energy they can allocate to solution-making on their own. If things go awry, let students know it is okay to ask for parent support.

The most important thing that students should learn is that when classroom issues arise, it is appropriate for them to voice their concerns, yet they must follow accepted protocol and respect authority.

Get Involved

If you need assistance starting your Parent Advocacy Group or finding resources to support the ambitions of your gifted learners, please contact Svetlana Lucas directly at MAGC_Parent_Affiliate@hotmail.com.

Together, we can do wonderful things for the best and brightest in Mississippi!