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ADVOCACY
SUPPORT &
TRAINING

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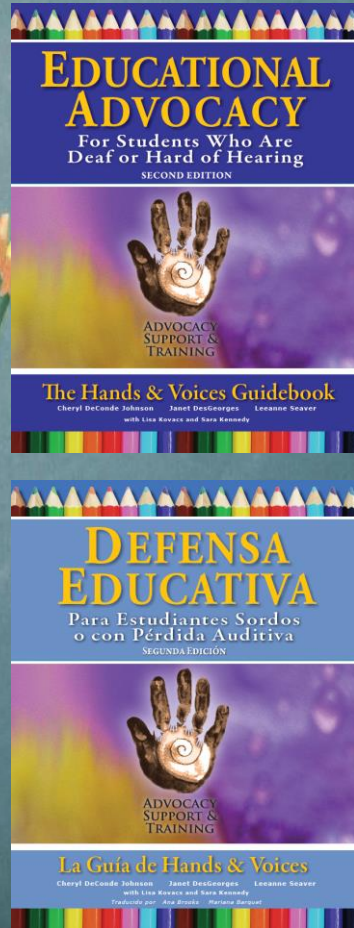


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Special Education Advocacy Strategies for Deaf+ (DeafPlus) Students with IEPs

August 27th, 2024

Kristen Stratton, J.M.



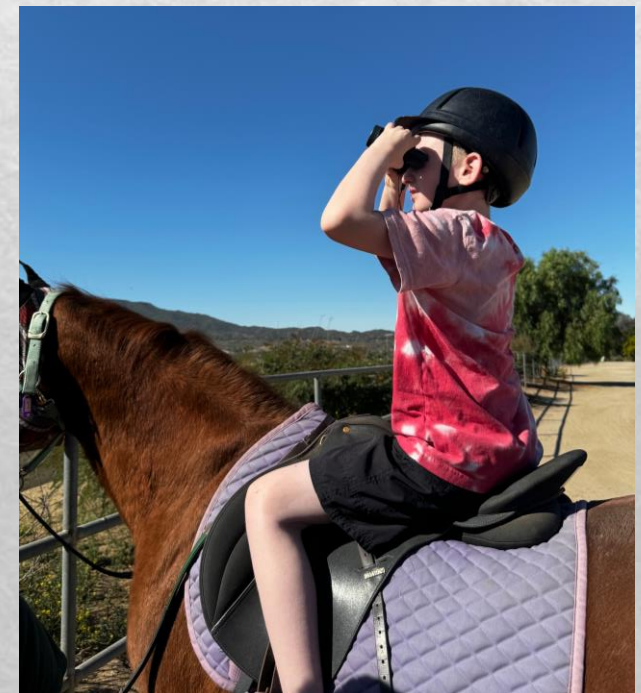
Advocacy Support & Training Webinar Series

Learning Objectives

- What is the Role of ADVOCACY in an IEP Meeting?
- General IEP Meeting Tips
- Federal laws and State regulations which apply to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children in Public Schools
- Advocacy Strategies to Address Deaf+ Specific IEP Meeting Challenges

A little about me...

- Hard of Hearing Adult
- Parent of three children, including Deaf+
- Military Spouse of 15 years
- Special Education Advocate/Consultant
- Current CA Hands & Voices Board Member
- Founding CA ASTra Advocate/Trainer
- Deaf Steering Committee Advisory Board
- Juris Master from LU School of Law
- Special Education Advocacy Certificate, USD School of Law



The Role of Advocacy in the IEP Meeting

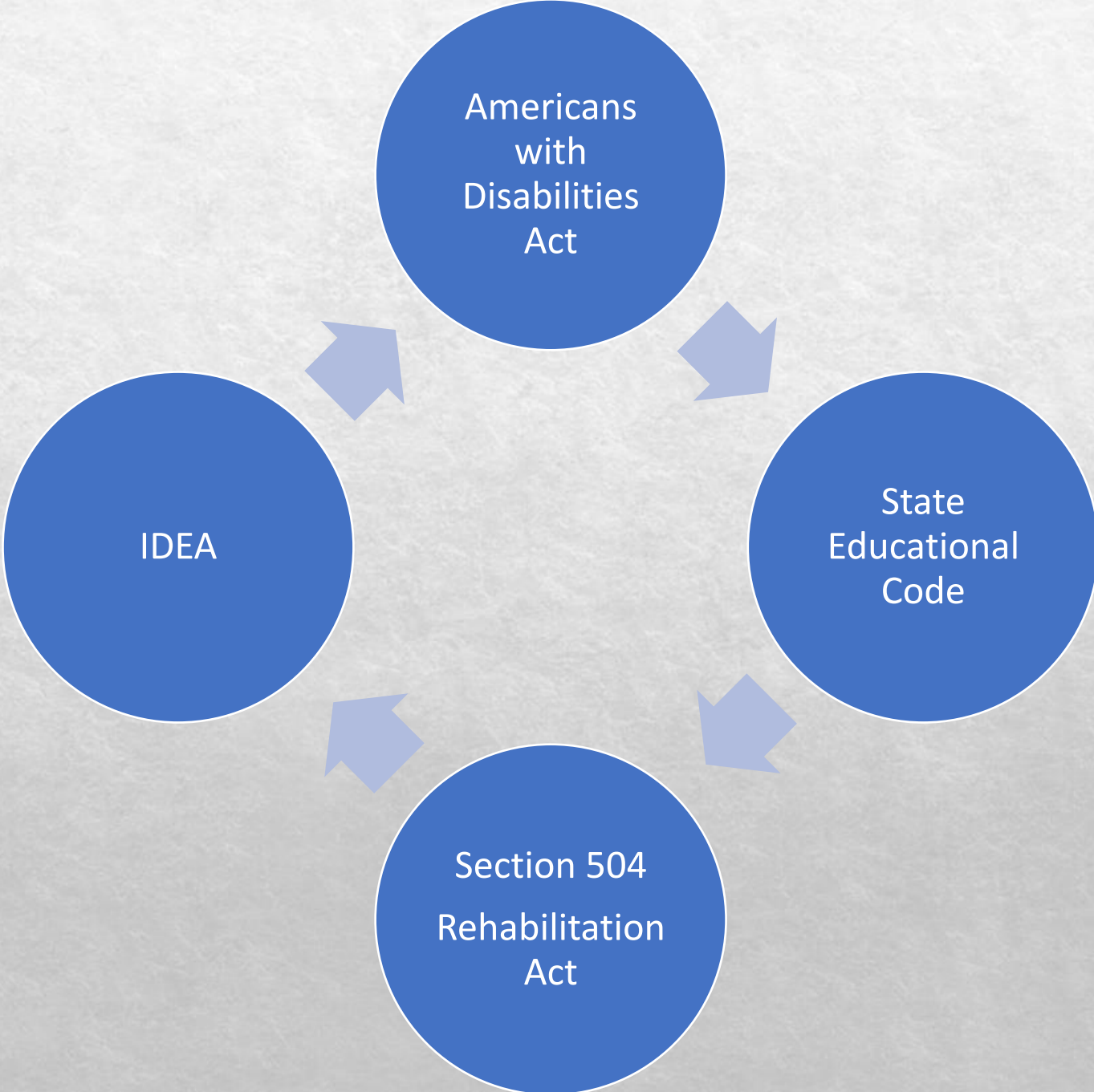
- What ADVOCACY is...
 - Preparation and effective communication
 - Accurately representing the needs of the Deaf+ Individual using objective and measurable data whenever possible
 - Taking a person-centered approach when developing an IEP that will support the student both now and with their future employment, higher education, and independent living goals
- What ADVOCACY is NOT...
 - Arguing for a particular outcome/service that may be contradictory to the evidence or to the person-centered approach
 - Being led by “emotions” more than “the facts”

Know Your Procedural Safeguards [IDEA Sec. 300.504]

- Preparation begins with knowing your rights!
- Some details may vary by state
- Generally outlines the rights of parents/guardians/educational rights holders
 - Ex: Independent Educational Evaluations
 - Ex: Access to Education Records
 - Ex: Parental Consent
- The role and responsibilities of the Local Educational Agency (LEA)
 - Ex: Prior Written Notice
 - Ex: Resolving disputes and Due Process



Laws and Regulations for Deaf+ Students



Effective Communication Equals Effective Advocacy...

- Request any required accommodations in advance and confirm
- Request a copy of work samples/data; reports; a draft copy of the IEP; emphasize “Meaningful Participation”
- Provide a written copy/email of parental concerns or a meeting agenda
- Eat before you arrive, arrive early, bring water, tissues, etc.
- Be prepared to take notes, audio recorder (check state law)
- Provide copies of letters, reports, medical orders, etc.
- *Include your child’s input whenever possible or send an “About Me”*

*Virtual IEP Meeting Tips

- Do a technology check at least one hour beforehand if you can...
 - Do you need to download any applications?
 - Software or App updates?
 - Check your Wi-Fi connection
 - Is your device charged?
 - Do you have working audio/microphone/camera
- Ensure the meeting is accessible for all participants
- It's best if all participants to participate online and on different devices whenever possible for optimal auditory and visual access



Prepared; Person-Centered; Effective Communication



I'm William

I am 11 years old & I am in 5th Grade

I love my family. Dad is a Marine, Mom is a Disability Rights Advocate, Ellie (sister, 14) & Steven (brother, 12). My dog is named Barkley. I love to travel in airplanes, trains, and in Dad's Jeep. I go to Chuck E Cheese and Grandma's house. I play with firetrucks, HotWheels, dig in my sandbox, ride horses, swim, and play iPad games.

I am DeafDisabled and use American Sign Language (ASL)

Vision Statement: "As parents, our goal for William is to live a purposeful, satisfying, and independent life. We want William to learn all the life skills and foundational academics necessary for supported living and supported employment. We want William to be able to self-advocate for his needs, communicate effectively in ASL, and make meaningful relationships with his peers."

My strengths:

- I am silly, desire to be fiercely independent, and I love my family and dog very much.
- I have a great memory for people, places, directions, locations, routines, and how things work. I am great with technology too.
- I understand days of the week, time, schedules, events, holidays and always want to know this information. Tell me!
- I LOVE to help. It's how I feel most confident. Give me a job to do and I am the most happy you will ever see me.
- I have great adaptive daily living skills and self-care skills. Don't assume I can't do it.
- I am good at deep breathing when I am upset. I will remind you too; I am very empathetic.

What works for me:

- I am a visual learner. I learn best by watching a demonstration or seeing real pictures in a social story.
- Visual Schedules and Visual Aids (real photos)
- Strict routines. If I do it once that way, that is how I will always want to do it.
- Telling me "First we do this...then this..."
- Give me all the info: who, what, when, where, and why.
- Frequent movement or play breaks.
- Hands on activities and building rapport
- Giving me a choice of two options to choose from instead of deciding for me
- Give me 10 and 5 minute warnings before transitioning to a new activity or taking away a preferred item. Not visual timers.
- Lots of praise for the good things I do!

What doesn't work for me & how you can help...

- Sudden change in activities or routine. Transitions without a warning.
- Placing a demand on me or asking me to do something new/non-preferred without first warning me or giving me all the information/expectations. I want to know "why"
- Not signing to me in ASL or not providing access to an ASL Interpreter
- Grabbing things out of my hands or grabbing my hands (it's like covering my mouth!)
- Assuming I don't understand or that I am incapable (baby talk is a "no-no"; I am 11 years old!)
- I trip and fall easily, please do not let go of my arms on stairs, uneven surfaces, or if I am running around. I need gentle assistance to stay safe due to my Cerebral Palsy. Ask Mom/Dad how.
- Ask me first before you do something for me. It's okay if I struggle a little bit. That is how I learn.
- I am working on not eloping, not yelling when I am frustrated, and recouping lost academic skills.

William's Deaf Culture

My receptive (how I understand you) language is American Sign Language. I am severely/profoundly Deaf. This means I cannot hear spoken language. If I respond to a loud sound, it does not mean I can hear you speak. Hearing a loud noise does not mean I can understand spoken language. I always need ASL.

My expressive (how you understand me) language is American Sign Language but I also sometimes use my voice with people who can hear me to help them better understand me. I speak for your benefit, not mine.
THIS DOES NOT MEAN I CAN HEAR YOU TALK. I AM STILL DEAF.

I have Cerebral Palsy which limits my expressive language ability in ASL. This doesn't mean I don't understand you. If you need to rephrase a question, ask me in Yes/No format; Give me a choice of two options; or use visual aids for me to point. Again, this does not mean I don't understand you, this helps you understand me.

I often use ASL Interpreters to help me communicate (school, community events, medical appointments, etc.) My interpreters hands should be signing when you are talking and when people around me are talking. They should also be letting me know about environmental noises (sirens, horns honking, doorbells, etc.) If you see any of my interpreters talking without simultaneously signing when they are on the job for me, remind them to sign.

Look at me when you speak, not at my interpreter. Don't say, "tell him I said..." Just speak to me and let me look at my Interpreter. I know what to do.

Interpreters--I know what I am doing. Get your hands up even if I am not looking at you. I often use my peripheral vision to decide if what is going on is worth my time and attention.
DO NOT FILTER MY ACCESS! SIGN. EVERYTHING. ALWAYS.

If you want my attention, wave your hand in my direction, tap me firmly on the shoulder, tap on the table where I am seated, switch lights on/off in the room, stomp on the floor so I feel the vibration. These are not considered rude in the Deaf community. If you really need help getting my attention, ask my parent's permission before grabbing my face or cupping your hands around my eyes. *That is only for certain people in specific roles to do when appropriate.*

NEVER GRAB MY HANDS. That is like covering my mouth. I can't communicate if you hold my hands.

Don't ignore me if I am talking or signing in a group setting. Give me the same attention, redirection, feedback, encouragement, etc. as any hearing student/child.

Don't cover your mouth or turn your back to me or put your head down when speaking to me. I rely on facial expressions, mouth shape, context clues, and my interpreter to help me understand. If I cannot see your face, we are not communicating.

Learning and communicating through an interpreter is hard work. I get tired faster than my hearing peers. It is my choice to use hearing aids or not. I will decide when to take a break from them. *Hearing aids do NOT give me "normal" hearing. I still need ASL at all times.*

Learn about my Deaf community and language:

<https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com>

Advocacy Strategies...IEP Meeting Basics

- Seek to understand the input of others...avoid misunderstandings later
- Who is required to be at the meeting?
- Know the names and roles of every individual in the room/meeting
- Take a break if you need one
- Meetings may be stopped and re-convened at anytime
- Follow up in writing with any formal requests made during the meeting
- You are an equal member of the IEP team and should be treated as such



Advocacy Strategies...Educational Needs

- *Input from your child should always be included whenever possible*
- Monitor data and progress on goals throughout the year
- Present levels of performance/concerns should be updated for meetings
- Goals should be 1) easily understood 2) addressing an area of need 3) measurable
- Accommodations, Services, and Placements should be clearly defined
- Roles and expectations of supports like interpreters, aides, and nurses should be defined in writing



Advocacy Strategies...Communication Needs

- What is "Effective Communication" for your child? Who decides?
- Take the Creative Approach
- Expressive and Receptive Language Needs Do Not Need to Match
- AAC Device, HAT, ASL Interpretation, CART
- ASL Interpreters + Deaf Interpreters + Signing Aides + what's the difference?
- What is the most **Language Rich Environment**?



SOURCE: Dept of Justice: ADA Effective Communication &
Dept of Education: Deaf Students Education Services

[OCR-000012]

Advocacy Strategies...Medical Support for Deaf+

- What level of medical training and intervention is required to keep your child safely at school?
- Who is qualified to implement doctor orders, administer medications, monitor your child?
- How can these needs be supported in the **Least Restrictive Environment** and the **Language Rich Environment**?
- Non-public agencies, private duty nurses, or cross-train school multiple personnel to meet staffing requirements



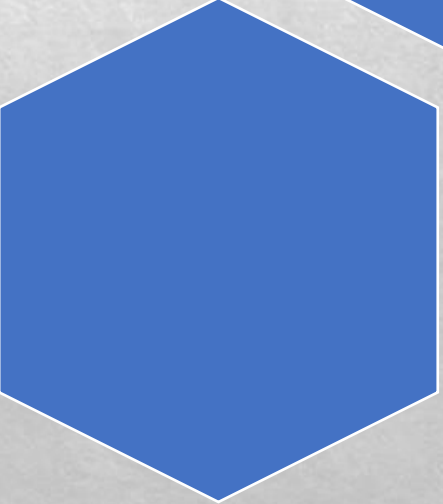


ASTra
Advocate

Training, Manual

Prior
Written
Notice

Request Records



File
Complaint
or Due
Process

Hire Advocate or Attorney



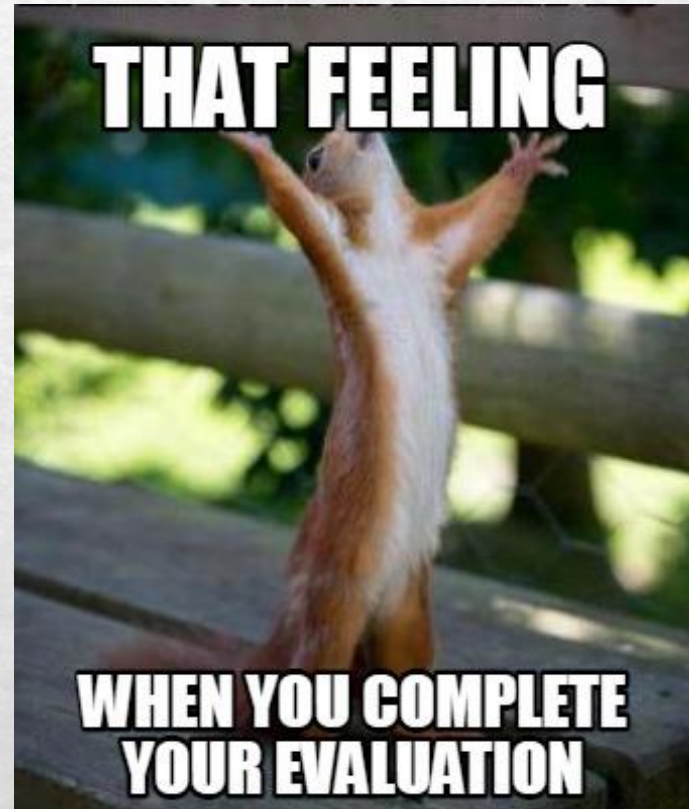
The most effective
advocate for your
child is YOU!

Your Turn...

Please type your questions in the Q&A box



Thank you!



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<https://handsandvoices.org/astra/webinars/>