

Child Advocacy Project



9 Tips for Advocating for Your Child at School

1. Know your child's rights:
 - Get to know the policies/rules of your school board.
 - Learn about what rights children have when suspended or expelled (e.g. the right to homework).
2. Keep written notes:
 - Write down all important meetings/conversations with the school in the order they happen.
 - Write down all names and regulations that school staff mention.
3. Remind the school of your right to "informed consent"—the right to make important health decisions, especially regarding medication—as your child's legal guardian.
4. Make sure school staff (principal, vice principal, teacher) know that ***you know*** the rules:
 - On discipline decisions, like suspension or expulsion, demand to see proper paperwork and check that it follows board policies (for example, look for reference to the law and the time your child must be out of school).
 - Make sure there is a plan for homework if your child has been suspended.
 - Hold the principal to the school board timeframe for IPRC meetings and other special-needs requests.
5. Before any meeting, ask who will be there to represent the school (like doctors or psychologists, special education consultants, school administrators or lawyers).
6. In important meetings (discipline, special education) take notes, make no commitments, and sign nothing. Consider bringing a friend or advocate as a witness to a meeting, and be sure to request an interpreter if you are not comfortable expressing yourself in English.
7. Take time to discuss anything proposed by the school with your own professionals and supporters—a balanced discussion of your child's needs will lead to better results.
8. Stay calm and professional. Give the school no excuse to punish your child!
9. When you think you need legal help because of an issue at school, call the Child Advocacy Project at 416-977-4448 x226 or visit www.childadvocacy.ca.