

# **ALPTI Raising the Standards Conference 2019**

## **Handouts for Session A Services and Supports**

**Wednesday May 29, 2019 9:00 am to 12:00 pm**

### **Session A.1 Effective Parental Advocacy; Jeana Winter**

Being an effective parental advocacy requires knowledge and skills. Learn effective ways to participate in the decision-making process for your child while working within sometimes complicated systems. Learn tips to make your communication concise, stay organized and access appropriate services for your child within any system.

### **Session A.2 How to Access Your Community Using LifeCourse Materials and The Full Life Ahead Plan for Success; Tammy Moore & Judy Barclay**

Using the Community of Practice Life Course Materials, the Full Life Ahead Workbook and Plan for Success we will show you new and exciting ways to power up anything from your IEP to community access without having state or federal funding.



## **Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy**

### **Agenda**

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#### **You will learn:**

- What advocacy means
- How to improve your advocacy skills
- How you can make a difference!

## Use Your Power

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**“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”**

—Alice Walker

Page 3

## What is an Advocate?

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**Advocates speak up for themselves or others to make things better.**

**Have you ever?**

- Met with your child's teacher about any issue?
- Spoke at a local gathering about a project you care about?
- Told a cashier that an item was not ringing up correctly?

Page 4

## Why be an Advocate?

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- Your experiences are valuable and can be used to improve things
- You know when something is or isn't working
- You have ideas how to make things better
- You have the only long-term connection to this child

Page 5

## Six Skills

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### **To be an effective advocate:**

1. Understand your child's learning needs and or disability
2. Know the key players
3. Know your rights and responsibilities
4. Become well organized
5. Use clear and effective communication
6. Know how to resolve disagreements

Page 6

## In Other Words:

1. Who is the "star"?
2. Who are the players?
3. What are the rules?
4. What is my plan of action?
5. What do I say when it's my turn?
6. What do we do when we disagree?



Page 7

## Skill #1: Understand Your Child's Learning Needs or Disability



### Understanding helps you:

- Know which services are appropriate for your child
- Have high expectations
- Find the right assistive technology and accommodations

**Use resources to learn more!**

Page 8

## **Skill #2: Know the Key Players**

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- Who is the director or decision maker?
- Are staff people public, non-profit, or private employees?
- How can you find a person's name?



Page 9

## **Skill #3: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities**

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### **Learn about them by:**

- Reading Web sites
- Asking how service is funded
- Asking to see laws and policies
- Asking questions
- Joining a group

Page 10

## Parents as Partners

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**Parents and professionals can be partners and:**

- Work together
- Share goals
- Have individual roles
- Share authority
- Have different skills
- Solve problems

Page 11

## Skill #4: Become Well Organized

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- Keep records
- Put it in writing
- Keep a phone log
- Have a meeting notebook

Page 12

## **Skill #5: Use Clear and Effective Communication**

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- Keep your eyes on the “prize” – the right service for your child!
- Listen and ask questions



Page 13

## **Skill #5: Use Clear and Effective Communication**

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- Focus on needs of the child
- Problem solve together to find solutions



Page 14



## **Skill # 5: Use Clear and Effective Communication**

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- Speak clearly
- Avoid making people feel defensive
- Turn negatives into positives
- Summarize



Page 15

## **Tips for Good Communication at a Meeting**

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- Focus on your goal
- Show respect and expect it from others
- Manage your emotions
- Ask questions
- Rephrase for clarification
- Say thanks

Page 16

## Tips for Written Communication

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### Letters should:

- Be sent to person who can make a change
- Be dated and signed
- Focus on one or two issues
- Be no longer than one page
- Set a deadline if a reply is requested
- Give your contact information

**Remember to keep a copy for yourself!**

Page 17

## When You Disagree

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- Disagree without being disagreeable
- Apologize if needed
- Separate the person from the problem
- Realize NO ONE has all the answers
- Make sure your facts are correct
- Choose your battles

Page 18

## **Skill #6: Know How to Resolve Disagreements**

### **Informal Processes:**

- Talk to people first



Page 19

## **Skill #6: Know How to Resolve Disagreements**

### **Formal Processes:**

- Mediation
- Complaints
- Appeals



Page 20

## Skills Checklist

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- ✓ What have you learned?
- ✓ Is there a skill you hope to improve?
- ✓ Do you need more resources?
- ✓ Do you need more support?

Page 21

## Summary

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**"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."**

—Helen Keller

Page 22

## Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy

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