

Writing an Effective Advocacy Letter

The objective of this section is to help you effectively communicate your needs or wishes to achieve success in your advocacy work -- that is, advocating for your own child. You will also learn what an effective advocacy letter looks like, and know where to ask for help.

As you saw in the video excerpt, writing an effective advocacy letter requires a coherent plan, a level head, and attention to detail. Like all effective writing, a letter of advocacy needs to have a defined purpose, audience, and message.

Purpose

There are many reasons you may need to write an advocacy letter, but three of the most common are:

1. To insist that your child needs more 1-to-1 support at school.
2. To request an IEP (Individual Education Plan) meeting.
3. To request a meeting for a specific concern, such as changing a teacher, student is being bullied, or IEP is not being implemented.

Clearly define your purpose before you begin writing, as it will help you to write a concise and focused letter.

Audience

Your audience might be a Principal, a Case Manager, or someone else within the school. However, it is important to note that even though the letter may be intended for someone specific; there is a good chance someone else outside of the immediate situation may read it.

Before you begin writing, consider who your primary audience is, including how much knowledge he or she already has about the situation, and whether you have communicated with this person before, in writing or face-to-face.