Tips for Self-Advocates:

* Set short and long-term goals for yourself. Be more specific with the short-term goals, but let yourself dream with the long-term goals. We all need a vision to work towards!
* Challenge yourself to figure out what you don’t yet know. This is the first step to being fully-informed to make your own decisions. Knowledge is power!
* Practice different styles of advocacy and know when to use them wisely.
* Determine where you need supports and don’t be afraid to ask for them. Everyone needs support from allies of one kind or another and that is what us so successful.
* Determine our strengths and where you can serve as the support person for others.
* Learn when/how to respectfully ask people supporting you to step back if you’re being led in a direction you don’t want to go or if you disagree with their suggestion.
* Reach outside the box when creating a support team. Allies come in all forms, and they don’t always have to be family members. In fact, sometimes we are different people when we are living independently. Create a community alliance to build on more traditional family supports.
* Recognize your own expertise! You know yourself, your goals, your needs, your interests. Claim this knowledge, while still remembering that we have a lot to learn.
* Don’t forget to have fun! Life isn’t all about the serious stuff. Sometimes it’s important to just laugh.





Tips for Parents:

* Set short and long-term goals for yourself as a parent who may be filling two roles (e.g., “parent” and “ally) that may not always mirror one another.
* Challenge yourself to let your child take risks and figure out what they don’t yet know from experience. Embrace the dignity of risk. We all need to do it to learn from life and learn who we are.
* Practice different styles of support – sometimes providing suggestions or sometimes waiting to be asked even if you have a suggestion on the tip of your tongue!
* Determine where you need supports to identify the difference between “being a parent” and “being an ally” or “a support person.”
* Learn when/how to respectfully take a step back. Independence is something we all seek, and something we all deserve.
* Know that other people are out there to support your child in reaching success. Sometimes it’s a reality that your role as a parent may trump your role as an ally. So, promote your child to make connections with people who may not play dual roles. Allies within the disability community can serve as great mentors and adopted family members to your child. Connections such as this help your child recognize an association with the Disability Community and the Disability Rights Movement.
* Recognize your child’s expertise! As a parent, you’ve taught a lot of life lessons along the way, but don’t forget that you wanted to think for yourself too. Your child is no different.
* Don’t forget to have fun! There’s a lot of thought that goes into life, but sometimes we just need to let go and live.