

ADVOCATING FOR YOUR GRANDCHILD AT SCHOOL



Every grandparent wants their grandchild to succeed in school. But schools can be confusing and sometimes staff may not know the best way to help kinship families. You know your grandchild best and can push for the support they need in school. You have an important role in your grandchild's education. By being an advocate for your grandchild you can help them reach their full potential.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOUR GRANDCHILD AT SCHOOL:

- **Connect** with your grandchild's team. This may include: teacher, principal, psychologist, speech therapist, nurse, and occupational therapist.
- **Build** relationships with people who are working with your grandchild. They are there to help and want to know what works at home.
- **Talk** to school staff. Tell them the best way to connect with you (emails, letters home, text, phone calls, etc.).
- **Make** a contact list of your grandchild's team. Know who to talk to at your grandchild's school that can answer your questions.
- **Check-in** with the teacher. Tell them what is going on at home (upcoming court date, trouble at home, unexpected visit from parent). The teacher can support your grandchild during these hard times.



KNOW YOUR GRANDCHILD'S RIGHTS

Learn more about your grandchild's rights to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA).

- Accommodations can be made to support your grandchild's learning (extra time for test taking, special seating, visual supports, decreased classroom distractions, and more).
- For more information visit:

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html>



STAY INFORMED

Learn about the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. Know your rights as a caregiver.

- You are a part of the IEP team. You have equal power to make choices.
- You can call an IEP meeting with the team at any time.
- Listen and learn from the school team.
- Talk to the team about your grandchild's goals.
- You can disagree with decisions if you don't think it is best for your grandchild.
- Ask the school about parent advocates who can help you during important meetings.



Find out what is working at school and what isn't. If your grandchild has accommodations, ask if they are being used. Make sure the plan you agreed to is being implemented.

- Ask your grandchild what their goals are and include them in the discussion. You can ask them questions like: “How do you learn best?” or “What would make learning easier for you?”
- Encourage self-awareness and help your grandchild understand how to get their needs met in school. Talk to them about what challenges they face at school and brainstorm possible solutions.

EDUCATE YOUR GRANDCHILD

Teach your grandchild phrases they can use to advocate for themselves. Here are some examples:

- “I am having a hard time with the noise in the classroom, is there somewhere else I can go to work?”
- “I am starting to feel overwhelmed can I get a drink of water and take a break?”

Try to build a positive relationship with the school. Talk to them about your family's needs. Grandparents are an important part of the team!



Ties That Bind is a program of the Jessie F. Richardson Foundation. With this program, we aim to connect grandparents and kinship caregivers with the resources they need.

Visit us at <http://tiesthatbindor.org/> for more.