

Advocacy Planning Worksheet

About this tool

When you need to speak up about a concern for your child at school, it can help to pause and organise your thoughts before speaking with the school.

This tool helps you clarify what is happening, how it is affecting your child, and what support or change may help. It also helps you identify the key message you want the school to understand before starting a conversation.

When to use this tool

- you want to prepare for a conversation or meeting with the school
- a concern has continued over time or is serious in nature
- you want to think through possible next steps before raising it with the school

How to use it

1. Take a few minutes to write down the key points. Focus on facts, observations and examples where possible.
2. If you are using the Word version, you can adapt the worksheet by removing sections that are not relevant to your situation.
3. The text inside each box is a prompt to guide your thinking. Once you add your own notes, you can delete the prompt text.
4. Use your notes to help you prepare for a conversation, email or meeting with the school.

My main concern

What is the main issue you want to address? For example: my child is becoming upset about going to school, struggling to complete homework, or finding certain activities at school difficult.

What's been happening

Briefly describe what you've noticed or what your child's shared, and when this is happening. For example: Over the past few weeks my child has been saying they don't want to go to school on days when there is writing. For the past two weeks, my child has mentioned feeling confused during group activities and have come home frustrated after school.

Impact on child

How is this affecting your child's learning, wellbeing, or participation? For example: my child is avoiding certain activities, becoming frustrated, losing confidence, or feeling anxious about school.

What has been tried so far

Supports or strategies that have already been attempted. For example: classroom adjustments, communication with teachers, trialling a strategy, or changes that have been discussed previously.

What has helped before

Supports or strategies that have worked well for your child in the past. For example: visual supports, clear instructions, predictable routines, movement breaks, reassurance from a familiar adult.

What may help now

What support, adjustment or change might help your child. For example: trialling a new strategy, adjusting an existing support, improving communication, or reviewing the situation together.

What I hope we can explore together

What next step or discussion might help move things forward. For example: discussing possible adjustments, trialling a new strategy, or planning how to review the situation.

My key message

If you could explain the situation clearly in one or two sentences, what would you say? Keeping your message short can help the school quickly understand what matters most. It's helpful to focus on the main concern and how this is affecting your child and what support or change might help.

For example: I'm concerned that the current approach may not be supporting my child during group activities. I'd like to explore strategies that could help them participate more comfortably.

Who is the best person to speak with first?

Thinking about the right starting point can help concerns be addressed more quickly. For example: classroom teacher, learning support team, assistant or deputy principal, principal.

How I want to approach the conversation

Thinking about the purpose of the conversation can help keep discussions focused. For example: collaborative discussion, seeking clarification, requesting additional support, or planning next steps together.

What support might help me

Preparing support for yourself can help you feel more confident during the conversation. For example: bringing notes, asking another person to attend the meeting, requesting time to think before responding, or following up in writing.

Next step

What will you do next? For example: request a meeting, send an email, gather more information, or seek advice.