

fAMILY

MEET CRYSTAL JACKSON

Parent Advocate of the Month

August 2025

WHAT MADE YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION?

I decided to advocate for my child's education after seeing firsthand that his needs were not being met in the classroom. As a parent, I realized that no one knows him better than I do, and I couldn't stay silent when I saw barriers preventing him from reaching his potential. My decision came from love, but also from a deep belief that every child deserves access to a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment.



WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES?

It means being his voice when he can't speak for himself, ensuring his rights are protected, and pushing for the services and supports that will help him thrive. It's not about being combative—it's about being informed, persistent and committed to his well-being, even when the process is exhausting.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER FAMILIES ADVOCATING FOR THEIR CHILD'S RIGHTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Learn your rights, document everything, and trust your instincts. Don't be afraid to ask questions or request clarification in writing. Build a team around your child that includes educators, therapists, and other parents who understand the system. And remember—advocating is not being "difficult"; it's being a parent.



WHAT DOES BEING YOUR CHILD'S BEST ADVOCATE MEAN TO YOU?

Start with your state's Department of Education website and read the special education regulations. Attend workshops, webinars, and parent support groups. Connect with advocacy organizations and network with other families who have walked the same path. The more informed you are, the more confident you'll feel in making decisions for your child.