

fAMILY

MEET JULIA VALVERDE

Parent Advocate of the Month

July 2025

WHAT MADE YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION?

I chose to advocate for my child's education upon recognizing that his unique strengths and needs were not being adequately addressed. As his parent, I have a deep understanding of who he is and felt a strong responsibility to ensure he received the appropriate support to remain safe, continue learning, and reach his full potential.

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

Being my child's strongest advocate means ensuring their voice is heard—especially when they are unable to speak up for themselves. It involves navigating the complexities of the special education system, asking difficult but necessary questions, and persistently addressing issues when something isn't right. For me, advocacy is about securing the support they need to thrive emotionally, academically, and socially.



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

My biggest piece of advice is to trust your instincts—you know your child better than anyone! Don't hesitate to ask questions or speak up during meetings. When decisions are being made, I always consider two key questions: What is the data showing? And what does the law state? It's also essential to document everything—keep written records of what was discussed in meetings, emails, and your child's progress or lack thereof.

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

The best way to begin educating yourself is by first understanding your rights under the law. I started by reading the "Parental Rights in Special Education" booklet, which provided a strong foundation. From there, I sought out additional resources on special education, including relevant laws and legislation, to deepen my knowledge and better advocate for my child.