

family



MEET COLLEEN COLLICK

Parent Advocate of the Month

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WHAT MADE YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION?

The thing that made me advocate for my son's education was believing that, with the right support, he could achieve more than anyone expected. From the start, his father and I knew what he was capable of, and we needed to ensure that both the classroom and the whole child study team could provide the support he needed. SEPTA's flexible seating initiative across the district also played a key role, giving my son the seating arrangements that allowed him to focus and complete his work successfully.



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

Being my son's best advocate means using my voice to express his needs, to stand up for him when he can't, and to make sure that every opportunity is available for him to succeed. It means partnering with teachers, support staff, and programs to ensure he has the tools and accommodations that allow him to reach his full potential.

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

Some advice I would give to other families about their child's rights in special education is to visit every classroom setting to find the best fit for your child. What works one day might not work the next, so flexibility and patience are essential. Bring an advocate to IEP meetings, actively participate in brainstorming IEP goals and progress, and remember that everyone's voice matters and should be heard.



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

The best way to educate yourself about special education and related services is to join the Special Education PTA, attend meetings in your district, study the PRISE book, and utilize the resources available through The Arc of New Jersey to best support your family's needs. Don't be afraid to ask questions when you are unsure about an IEP goal, a placement, or what the future can hold (Bring ADARA to your IEP meetings)