

Preparing Your Child to Self-Advocate

A guide to help you gradually hand the conversation over to your athlete — so they learn to speak up for what they need, on their own terms.

THE GOAL

Self-advocacy doesn't mean your child handles everything alone. It means helping them eventually say **what helps me learn, what's hard for me, and what I need from my coach**, with you moving from speaking *for* them to helping them speak *for themselves*.

● Turn Accommodations Into Athlete Language

IF YOUR ATHLETE NEEDS...

THEY CAN SAY...

Written instructions

"Can you show me what we're doing?"

Repetition

"Can you say that again?"

Chunking steps

"Can we go one step at a time?"

Preferential positioning

"Can I stand where I can see you?"

Check-ins

"Can you check that I'm doing this right?"

Extra processing time

"Give me a second to think about that."

Reduced distractions

"Can I move somewhere quieter?"

● The "I Need..." Formula

I need _____ because _____.

"I **need** you to show me **because** I don't always understand verbal instructions."

"I **need** a little more time **because** I'm still processing it."

● Building Toward Independence

Parent
speaks

→

Parent &
athlete
together

→

Athlete
speaks,
parent
nearby

→

Athlete
speaks
independently

Before stepping in, ask: "What could you say to your coach?" Every child moves through these stages on their own timeline.

My Self-Advocacy Card

Fill this out together before the season starts.

I am good at:

What helps me:

If I don't understand, I can say:

Something that can be difficult for me:

My coach should know:

If I need help, I can say:

"Your child's IEP may explain what they need. Their voice helps explain how they need it."

You are part of a team working together to maximize your student-athlete's success. — Accommodations to the Field