

## APPENDIX E

## SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS

Please refer to Appendix F for glossary definitions.

Self-advocacy is an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert one's own interests, desires, needs, goals, and rights. Self-advocating involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions (e.g., the student knows what accommodations are needed and how to ask for them). These skills may include the ability to identify one's own strengths and needs and being actively involved in setting goals and developing plans to achieve them, thus allowing for successful navigation of academic, home, and social settings. Students with cochlear implants, similar to all students who are deaf or hard of hearing, benefit from developing and mastering self-advocacy skills. The area of self-advocacy is a key educational component for a student's educational plan regardless of age.

Students are never too young to start on the path to becoming strong self-advocates. Educational planning teams, professionals, and parents are ultimately responsible for ensuring a student receives appropriate educational instruction and modifications. One component of educational instruction often overlooked is supporting the positive development of a student's self-advocacy skills both at home *and* at school. A child who early on can learn to self-advocate is better prepared for future independence at school, at home, and in the community.

Self-advocacy skill development is often considered a key component to transition and educational planning. Self-advocacy skills develop over time with practice and guidance. Students need opportunities to practice their skills in a range of settings and with various people.

Parents and educators can support students in developing self-advocacy knowledge and skills by:

- educating them on their needs, rights, and responsibilities by practicing needs identification and goal setting;
- assisting them in understanding a problem or a challenge and selecting strategies to try;
- providing them with opportunities to practice strategies to problem solve, get needs met, or progress toward goals; and
- involving them in planning for the future.

Situations in which students can practice self-advocacy related to their cochlear implant use may include:

- malfunctioning or ineffectively-used assistive hearing technology,
- inadequate auditory and visual access during communication interactions, or
- a need for clarification of communication or repairing communication breakdowns.

Self-advocacy skill development will allow students to become more successful in their daily interactions and in getting their needs met.

## RESOURCES

"Fostering Skills in Self-Advocacy: A Key to Access in School and Beyond" (Luckner & Becker, 2013), *Odyssey* magazine—<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>

*Guide to Self-Advocacy Skill Development* (Anderson, 2012)—<https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com>

Hands & Voices Advocacy Academy (Hands & Voices, n.d.)—[www.handsandvoices.org](http://www.handsandvoices.org)

*Students with Cochlear Implants: Guidelines for Educational Program Planning*—<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>

*Tips for More Effective Advocacy* (National Association of the Deaf, n.d.)—[www.nad.org](http://www.nad.org)

## SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS CHECKLIST

NEVER  
OCCASIONALLY  
FREQUENTLY  
ALWAYS (INDEPENDENTLY)

### KNOWLEDGE OF SELF AND NEEDS

	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	FREQUENTLY	ALWAYS (INDEPENDENTLY)
Identifies when technology is not working				
Demonstrates understanding of his or her hearing loss				
Uses the correct terminology for auditory technology				
Is responsible for the care of technology				
Demonstrates appropriate use of the interpreter or transliterator				
Demonstrates understanding of his or her own strengths and weaknesses as a student				
Is able to explain his or her hearing loss, technology, and accommodations to adults				
Is able to explain his or her hearing loss, technology, and accommodations to peers				
Recognizes when information being received via an interpreter or transliterator is not being conveyed clearly				

### COMMUNICATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACCESS

Identifies when there is interfering background noise impacting communication access				
Is able to report to a specific staff member challenges in communication access				
Is able to report to a specific staff member when technology, amplification, or assistive listening devices are not working				
Demonstrates understanding of the accommodations and modifications that may assist in learning				
Identifies a communication barrier and suggests a solution				
Recognizes when information or communication is unclear and when repetition is needed				
Asks questions to obtain information when repetition or clarification is needed				

### UNDERSTANDING OF RIGHTS AS A PERSON WHO IS DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

Demonstrates an understanding of the components of self-advocacy				
Understands the role of the interpreter or transliterator (if applicable)				
Is able to identify barriers and provide solutions to them (not limited to communication)				