



Connecting With Youth |

What Messages Did You Hear About Young People When You Were Growing Up?



**Beware We Hear A
Lot Of Negative
Messages About
Young People.**

**Sometimes
Those Old
Disrespectful
Messages About
Youth Bouncing
Around In Our Heads.**

**BE ACCEPTING
OF OTHERS!**



Don't judge people by their age, consider their experience.

Don't talk to youth in a way that it sounds like you are talking to a child.

Avoid assuming young people won't be able to understand something. Instead take the time to explain information to them.



In your group, don't just ask young people to handle only small or not so important jobs. Try not to be surprised when young people say something intelligent, when they are dressed nicely, or when they are well organized.



What Attracted You To Get Involved In Self-Advocacy?



SOME TIPS...

- 1. When you meet with students, begin by asking them what they think self-advocacy is.**
- 2. Ask them what they think when they hear the words “independent living”.**
- 3. Ask students where they see themselves beyond high school. Keep in mind this maybe a hard question to be asked. Students may not be able to answer this question the first time.**



SOME TIPS...

4. **Self-advocacy can give you the courage to listen to your voice. A peer atmosphere helps you to say what is on your mind. Talking to a peer is different from talking to a teacher.**
5. **Always support youth to make their own decisions. Give them a chance to take control.**



SOME TIPS...

6

Do not judge students. Tell them their opinions are important. Keep your own opinions to yourself.

7

Find meaningful ways for youth to get involved.

8

Remember we are all individuals. When a teen expresses their opinion, they are not speaking for everyone under the age of thirty.



SOME TIPS...

9. Make the meeting fun with lots of hands-on activities.
10. Sometimes youth are reluctant to speak up when teachers, support staff or parents are in the room.



THE LAST TIPS...

11. Remember students have busy lives. Respect their choices.

12. Set up group agreements. They should include reminding seasoned leaders to talk as little as possible.


13. A disability rights meeting may be new to youth, so remember to take your time and not go too fast.



THE LAST TIPS...

14. Be careful not to interrupt a young person. Give them time to share their ideas.
15. Create an atmosphere that says it is okay to make mistakes. This can be an opportunity to introduce what we call “dignity of risk
16. Be laid back. Listen. Don’t jump in with an answer.



A man in a dark suit and white shirt is standing on the left, operating a professional video camera mounted on a tripod. He is looking towards the right. In the center-right, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a light blue hoodie and purple shorts, is seated in a green wheelchair. She is holding and reading a white document. The setting appears to be an indoor room with a red carpet, a white brick wall on the right, and a dark wood-paneled wall with a window in the background. A black bag is hanging from the wood paneling. A white radiator is visible on the right wall.

**How have
you tried to
get young
people
involved?**

**Tell us a short story from
when you were younger.
an example of you
speaking up, taking
control, making a big
decision that was not
popular with the people
around you?**

