

Self-Advocacy Top Tips from the SSP

In 2021 students enrolled in the Support Skills Program (SSP) participated in a student-led project on the topic of self-advocacy. Self-advocacy is learning to stand up for one's rights and needs. It may include learning to be more assertive, accepting and declining help, ensuring alternate format requests are met at school, managing adaptive technology and support staff, and disclosing and explaining vision impairment. Self-advocacy is systematically and sequentially taught within the SSP to ensure that students understand their rights and responsibilities and learn life skills that can assist them at school and beyond. These skills taught within the SSP complement the support the students receive through the visiting teacher service and their schools.

In 2021 students from Grade 4 to year 10 have been contributing ideas and recommendations towards the SSP poster project noting their top tips for success in self-advocacy at school. Here are some of the student's top tips:

- ensure you have everything for your classes ready for the day
- learn where everything is at the school and where you need to go
- set your own goals, and know what you need
- get materials in the right format, for example electronic
- if there is a danger talk to the teacher about making it safe
- know how to accept and decline offer of help politely and assertively
- give your teacher your vision statement and make sure it explains the things that help you in the classroom
- be organised
- have good technology skills
- make sure your devices are charged
- learn to touch type so you can do things yourself
- understand your vision impairment
- be comfortable to tell people that you cannot see something and what can help you
- listen to get to know your environment
- don't hesitate to ask for help
- ask for help if you need directions
- let the teacher know if you need something in a different format
- sit at the front of the classroom if you need to
- be polite, but know your rights
- pick your battles
- be a good friend and respect people
- have a balanced timetable including time for study and homework and some time to relax

Renee Williamson
Teacher, Support Skills Program, 2022