

# I HOPE!

# I CAN!

# I WILL!

The Self-Advocacy Playbook

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Welcome ~

Have you ever wished you could do something and were told no by someone? Have you ever done something and wished you had a modification to make your involvement more inclusive? Have you ever had someone else advocate for you and things changed for the better?

You don't have to depend on others to speak for you. YOU can make a difference in your own life.

This Self-Advocacy Playbook will show you how to use your voice. It will teach you how to speak up for yourself and make your life what you want it to be.

You do not have to be excluded or marginalized anymore.

You are the change agent, and you can make a difference today. You can also use your voice to help others.

Let's begin to change your life...

*"No need for sight when you have a vision."*

~ Lex Gillette, current world record holder in the long jump, a five-time Paralympic medalist, a four-time long jump world champion, and an 18-time national champion



## EMBRACING YOUR TRUTH: The Power of I WILL!

Hopefully you noticed the name we chose for this playbook:

### **I HOPE! I CAN! I WILL!**

We are about to learn how to speak up for ourselves. Before we begin, it's important to embrace your truth and to believe in yourself.

Trust yourself.

How we speak to ourselves is critically important. We are going to make a one-word change and harness the power of your own inner voice.

Read the following statements aloud:

I **HOPE** TO SPEAK UP AND ASK FOR WHAT I NEED.  
I **CAN** SPEAK UP AND ASK FOR WHAT I NEED.

Now, let's change one word. Read aloud.

I **WILL** SPEAK UP AND ASK FOR WHAT I NEED.  
I **WILL** SPEAK UP AND ASK FOR WHAT I NEED.  
I **WILL** SPEAK UP AND ASK FOR WHAT I NEED.

Did you hear the difference? Did your posture change? Your volume?  
Your confidence?

Believe in the power of I WILL!

## What is Self-Advocacy Anyway?

Self-Advocacy sounds like a high school vocabulary word, doesn't it? But self-advocacy is, quite simply, asking for what you need so you can get what you want.

In all areas of life, we must learn to communicate our needs and work with others to fulfill those needs.

*"I learned a long time ago the wisest thing I can do is be on my own side, be an advocate for myself and others like me."*  
~ Maya Angelou, poet and Civil Rights Activist

This Playbook teaches you – step-by-step how to speak up. You will use these strategies your entire life. With teachers. With coaches. With employers, parents, family, and friends.

The good news is that you already are a self-advocate. Think about it. When was the last time you had to explain what you needed to be successful?

This playbook will help you raise your game, put a framework around the method so you can duplicate it again and again.

You'll learn that you need to be proactive. But what does that mean, exactly?

When you are proactive, you prepare for a variety of outcomes. You anticipate questions and concerns and have ready answers or a willingness to seek those answers. You speak up for yourself with confidence and courage. You slay barriers to participation.

Inside these pages, you are guided through the self-advocacy process. We provide examples and offer questions that guide you to think, to build your confidence muscle and strengthen your belief in yourself.

*“One common thing about great achievers is that they keep asking useful questions every day. They ask questions like: ‘What do I want and what do I need to do to get it?’”*

~ Israelmore Ayivor, author of *Become a Better You*

When you learn a new skill – how to climb a cliff, how to play a musical instrument, how to ride a bike, how to cook your favorite food – you don’t master it the first time out. But with a good attitude, focus, planning, patience, and practice, you often far exceed your own expectations. You can do that with self-advocacy too.

As we walk through this manual, we’ve given you space to think and answer. Don’t skip these, please. The better prepared, the better the success.

Take your time with each step. The more thought and preparation, the more you grow in your ability and self-assurance to stand up and ask for what you need.

In sports athletes are often told to leave nothing on the table. They are asked to GO ALL IN!

We are asking the same of you. Let’s GO ALL IN.

## **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

What benefits do you see in developing Self-Advocacy skills?

When have you already been a self-advocate?

- Have you asked your parents for something they were reluctant to give?
- A teacher?
- A coach?
- Someone else?

What went well and in what ways were you successful?

What do you think could have gone better? This is a time for self-reflection. With an honest look back, you can identify your strengths and weaknesses, then develop new strategies.

### **MEET ANNA**

Anna is a seventh grader with a visual impairment. Her school placed her in physical education class for students with disabilities. Anna wanted to be in a class with her friends.

At her next Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting, she gathered her confidence and presented her dream.

One of the barriers identified was that her mobility class was at the same time as her friends' PE class. An easy fix.

The mobility teacher was willing to change their time together. Within one week, Anna was in PE with her friends. All she had to do was respectfully ask the right people and then work together to find a solution.  
She had to be a Self-Advocate.

## Self-Advocacy: The Sport

When you play a sport, there are things you need to understand before you take the field, right? The rules, for example. The equipment you might need. The terrain. You also need to identify your specific needs in order to participate.

If you are going to join a beep kickball team but have never played before, you might want to understand the game before you step on the court.

With Self-Advocacy, there are four basic building blocks you need to understand. Think of this as a player's guide to the sport of self-advocacy. But don't worry, there won't be a quiz.

Knowledge of Self is understanding yourself along with what you need to function and thrive in your various circles including school, home, clubs, organizations, community, and jobs.

Knowledge of Rights is understanding your rights as it pertains to your needs within your school, home, clubs, organizations, community, and jobs.

Communication is understanding how to share your wants and needs in a variety of situations such as sports teams, community recreation, after school clubs, in classrooms and in the community.

Leadership is understanding how to use your Self-Advocacy skills and your voice to help others get what they want and deserve. Leadership is using all the components of Self-Advocacy to benefit those around you.

The rest of this Playbook will be based on these four pillars.

## MEET HENRY

Henry is a high school senior. He wanted pickleball to be a spring intramural sport. He spent the summer before playing pickleball with his dad and he fell in love with the sport. He introduced the sport to his friends, and they loved how easy it was, how fast it moved, and how everyone could play. (Knowledge of Self)

He spoke to the athletic director about his idea, but the athletic director said there was no space and no one to oversee the club, and he could not imagine how to fit it into the schedule. (Knowledge of Rights)

Henry and his friends were talking about this issue during homeroom, and they asked their homeroom teacher if she would like to be their faculty supervisor. Their homeroom teacher said she wanted to help as she loved pickleball and wanted to get more exercise. She pointed out there were pickleball courts right across the street from the school.

The next day Henry went back to the athletic director and persuaded him to change his mind and allow them to start with a 6-week season. (Communication)

That spring fourteen pairs of students played four days a week. (Leadership)

**GUIDING QUESTION**

Think back to a time when you were proactive in getting a need met.  
Can you identify the four components in your own situation?  
This is a great time for you to pat yourself on the back!

Knowledge of Self:

Knowledge of Rights:

Communication:

Leadership:

## The Five-Step Process! Yes, Only Five Steps!

*“What’s within you is stronger than what’s in your way.”*  
 ~ Erik Weihenmayer, the first blind person to reach the summit of Mt. Everest and the first to hike all seven summits of the world

Let’s break this down so we can understand and implement. Experts have determined there are five steps needed for self-advocacy.

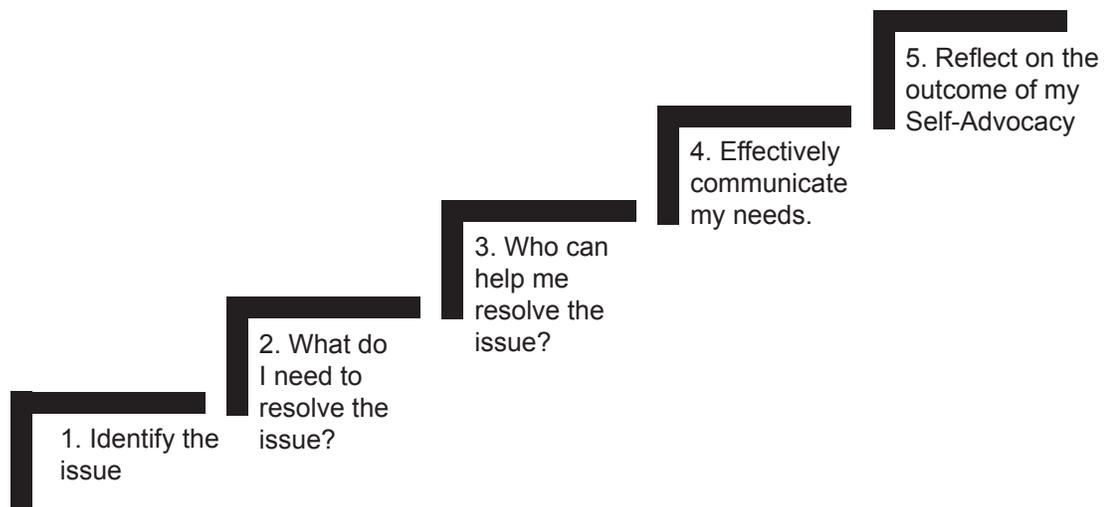
Step 1: Identify the Issue

Step 2: What Do Need?

Step 3: Who Can Help: The Support Team

Step 4: Effective Communication: Speak Up

Step 5: Reflect on the Outcome



Yep, that’s only five steps and we will take them one-at-a-time. You’ll be surprised just how straight forward this process is and how easy it will be to be a self-advocate!

### MEET JADE

Jade wanted to learn gymnastics. Since she was little, she dreamed of being a gymnast. Jade has albinism and as a result is visually impaired. Jade's mother called several gymnastics studios to inquire about enrolling Jade in beginning gymnastics. All the studios expressed reservations and fear about letting Jade participate. (Knowledge of Self)

Jade shared this story at Camp Abilities, her sports camp for youth with visual impairments. With the support of her mom the camp director and coaches, Jade decided to advocate for herself and become a gymnast. (Knowledge of Rights & Communication)

As we learn how to implement the five steps, Jade will be one of our guides. (Leadership)

## Step 1: Identify the Issue

### MEET SEAN

While in middle school, Sean discovered he loved running. While at camp he learned a variety of adaptations and focused on improving his time.

He entered high school and knew he wanted to run on the high school cross-country team. Not only did he want to, but he also knew he could be an asset to his team.

He developed an I WILL attitude and in the coming pages we will join him on his journey to participate and contribute.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

Where do you see a need for self-advocacy in your life right now?

What, specifically, do you want to change or achieve in your school, sport, or community? The more specific you can be, the easier it will be to develop a solid plan for self-advocacy.

Clarify WHY this is important to you? Knowing your why is the key to motivation.

I want this because:

For Sean, he loved running and he worked hard to improve. He enjoyed being part of a team, being with his friends. He wanted to run on the high school team so he could help them win. But he also wanted to get faster and faster.

Jade's dream of being a gymnast started early and only grew with each passing year. When she attended Camp Abilities, she was able to participate in several gymnastics' events. That did it! She would fight for her chance to be a gymnast.

## Step 2: What Do I Need?

You will have to speak with someone in order to get this resolved. In this section we identify that person AND we drill down on your exact needs.

Jade identified a gymnastics center she wanted to attend but the owner and coaches couldn't imagine how they could coach someone with a visual impairment. Jade needed to develop her self-advocacy plan to present to the gymnastics center.

For Sean, he needed to speak with the cross-country coach and if necessary, he may also have to speak to the athletic director, the principal or even the board of education.

*"You have the power to influence your future"  
~ Haben Girma, the first  
deafblind individual to graduate from Harvard University*

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

What or who is preventing you from participating?

Who do you need to speak with? This could be a teacher, a coach, an athletic director, or even a parent.

Who has the authority to make the necessary changes or adaptations?

Anticipate every argument you can imagine. Ask other people what they can think of. Not only will you have the answers you need but you'll also demonstrate your dedication.

What reasons are given for not allowing you to participate?

In Jade's example, the gymnastics studio was afraid Jade would get hurt. They had never coached a gymnast who was visually impaired and couldn't imagine how that would work.

Sean's coach also worried about his safety and the safety of the other runners on the course. There was also a concern regarding how he would handle travel meets.

Now that you know who you need to talk to, it's time to think through exactly what you want to talk about. It will be helpful for you to consider the activity you want to participate in as it relates to your individual situation.

Consider the following:

- Your visual needs for this setting and this activity.
- How will the environment affect your vision?
- What are the physical requirements for this activity?
- What equipment is used?
- What visual, tactile, or auditory support do you need?
- What type of communication would help you be successful?

You've given thought to the activity and your needs, now let's determine where you need support. Be as specific as possible.

We are going to give you some examples, but you need to think of your unique situation.

## **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Do the rules need to be modified? If so, how? For example, in a basketball game, you could be allowed to double-dribble or not be penalized for a handball in soccer.

Do you need special equipment or the current equipment to be modified in some way? For example, Jade needed to use a lower beam that had a piece of tape to indicate she was at the end of the beam. Sean needed both a guide and a tether.

Are there any adjustments needed so you can participate? Would something tactile help? An auditory cue?

Are there any instructional strategies to utilize? Maybe a chance to preview and work with the equipment before actual play begins. Sean needed to walk the trail before the race so he would know the obstacles that other runners could see.

In the Resource Section you will find modification lists for several sports.

You can also reach out to [CampAbilities.org](http://CampAbilities.org) and many other organizations for information the coach might find helpful.

### Step 3: Who Can Help: The Support Team

Teamwork is often the key to success. No matter who we are or our unique situations, we cannot go it alone. Let's take a minute to put your support team in place.

*"Asking for help is NOT a sign of weakness. Asking for help is a sign of inner strength.*

*~ June Converse, author*

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Who do you think might be able to help you? Every person on the planet needs a support group – a cheerleader – a sounding board. Which teachers, coaches, athletic directors, paraprofessionals, community leaders, counselors or guardians could you speak to regarding your situation?

Sean's mother happened to be a long-distance runner herself. She'd seen Sean run and knew he deserved a place on the team. Sean also reached out to the director of Camp Abilities to be on standby if he needed her.

Once Jade understood the necessary accommodations, she sat down with her Camp Abilities Counselor to help her identify what, exactly, to ask for. Her counselor was also available to speak to the gymnastics center if Jade needed her to. Step 4: Effective Communication: Speaking Up!

#### Step 4: Effective Communication: Speaking Up!

When you sit down to speak with the coach or other person in authority, you want to be prepared. To have your ducks in a row. Your job is to persuade this person to make the changes you need, to see things from your perspective. That's called Persuasive Speaking.

The whole idea of speaking can be scary. Don't panic. It's actually quite easy. So easy, in fact, we are giving you a script to use.

*“Be STRONG enough to stand alone, SMART enough to know when you need help, and BRAVE enough to ask for it.”*

*~ Ziad Abdelnour, CEO, Blackhawk Partners*

#### *Persuasive Speaking*

The great thing about persuasive speaking is that it can be broken down into an easy-to-follow script with five sections.

Let's join Jade and Sean on their persuasive speaking journeys. We've given you space to start writing your own!

## *Persuasive Speaking*

### Part 1: Introduce Yourself

This is simply a chance to say thank you for the time and focus the conversation on your needs.

This courtesy sets the stage for a positive interaction. You are showing the person you respect their time and attention. Usually this is returned with mutual respect and more willingness to listen.

Coach Mount, my name is Jade Walker and I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to me today. I'd like to discuss my taking classes at your gymnastics studio.

Coach Jones, my name is Sean Smith. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about running for you next year.

Write your introduction here. Don't overthink this. You've already done the prep work and you know your name.

Your Turn:

*Persuasive Speaking*

## Part 2: Make it Personal

You are a person, and you are talking to a person. We relate to each other as individuals with our stories. Stories are how we get to know each other and how we find common ground.

Tell a story of when you participated in the sport or why this is important to you. Explain how much you enjoyed and benefitted from the participation or how excited you are for the chance to try.

Jade: At my camp this summer, I learned to safely walk across the balance beam and how to do split jumps. I was even learning to do a flip off the beam. I felt like I could fly. I loved it. I can do more, learn more. I can fly higher. I even have a video of me, and I can show you other examples.

Sean: Coach, I've been running since I was a little kid. At my camp, I've been learning strategies to improve my time. I'm running a 7.20-minute mile. I even have a video of myself running with a guide. May I show you?

Your story:

## *Persuasive Speaking*

### Part 3: Explain What You Need and Anticipate Questions

Now that you've thought through the modifications you need, it's time to share them. This is the proactive piece you'll need.

Once a coach understands there are safe ways to accommodate, he or she is more likely to do so. Often the barrier is simply lack of knowledge. This is your chance to provide that knowledge.

Some of the knowledge you can provide includes:

- The modification checklists (see the Resource Section of this playbook).
- Equipment needs and where to obtain the items.
- Providing the coach with a person to speak with who has expertise in the sport or needed adaptations.
- Videos of other's successfully and safely participating.

Remember, part of your job is to educate!

After listening to the concerns of the gymnastics facility, Jade showed a video of gymnasts who are visually impaired and provided a list of equipment modifications, all of which were easy to do. She didn't just hand over the list, she took the time to explain how the modification worked.

Some of the modifications she discussed included:

- Tactile modeling with a demonstration.
- A low balance beam – which they already had!
- Bright tape on the floor in front of the vault
- Rope taped over the end of the beam.
- Clear markings at the corners of the mats – which they already had!

Be prepared to respond to any concerns the coach may have.

This may be a good time to lean on your support team. Ask what concerns they can think of. The more you can anticipate, the more you can address the concerns right then and there.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

List the concerns you have identified and your potential responses. If you don't have a response, go find one. Do the research. Ask your support team for ideas. Gather the modified equipment for a show and tell.

Remember, people want to support you, they just need to know how.

Concern #1:

Response/Resource:

Concern #2:

Response/Resource:

Concern #3:

Response/Resource:

**Don't stop until you've run out of ideas!**

There are some concerns we hear on a regular basis, so we've provided you with possible responses. Below is a sample. The entire list is provided in the Resource Section and at [CampAbilities.org](http://CampAbilities.org).

Teacher's Concerns	Your Response
I don't want you to get hurt.	I have the right to play and possibly get hurt like all my friends. This is called "The Dignity of Risk" and I choose to participate and take that risk just like everyone else.
I don't want the sighted students to get hurt.	I have modifications that would minimize that possibility. For example, we could have an auditory cue for each person on defense and make a tactile marking for me to know my boundaries. You could also provide a guide during a game.
I don't have that equipment.	Here is a list of different local and online stores that have all the equipment. You could also talk to my vision or mobility teacher for more ideas.
I don't want the other students to have to slow down their game play.	It is possible for students to still gain skill development and exercise when the game is slower.  Excluding me teaches the other kids in class that it is ok to leave me on the sidelines. I don't think that is a good concept to learn at school.

## *Persuasive Speaking*

### Part 4: Conclusion/Wrap-Up

Just as you started the conversation with respect, you end it with the same. Consider respect the bookends that hold everything else together. This is also a time to clearly ask for help and to answer any lingering questions.

Jade: Coach Mount, thanks again for talking to me. Are there any questions I can answer for you? Can we work together so I can learn more gymnastics skills? It would mean a lot to me to be able to keep flying.

Sean: Coach, do you have any concerns I didn't address? My mom and I are looking for a guide. When I find one, I'd like to start practice. Will that be okay with you?

Your turn:

*Persuasive Speaking*

## Part 5: Practice

Your persuasive speech is all written. You've thought of and addressed every obstacle. You've prepared a personal story. What else do you need to do?

**PRACTICE!**

When you stand or sit before someone in authority, you want to display an impressive confidence. What does that look like?

- Make an appointment and show up at least five minutes early.
- Stand up or sit-up straight. Sit still.
- Bring your notecards with your key points written down.
- Make eye-contact. Look at the person's face. Keep your chin up.
- Pause from time to time to answer questions. Then listen, listen, listen.
- Speak clearly and slowly. Try not to say "um" or "uh".
- Take notes.
- Dress appropriately for the meeting.
- Don't forget to breathe.
- Say thank you to the other person for taking the time to meet with you.

Remember that support team you put in place? It's time to call on them again. Role play until you feel comfortable. Accept constructive criticism and then practice again. Who knows, as you work together, you may come up with other issues you need to address.

Some people say it takes 10,000 hours to be a master at anything. We aren't suggesting you spend 10,000 hours practicing but it is important you practice more than once.

You've prepared and practiced a great speech, be confident.

**TRUST YOURSELF and GO FOR IT.**

Step 5: Reflect on the outcome.

The best way to improve on any skill is to look back and find ways to improve. This takes an honest assessment of yourself. It takes a mature person to identify areas that need some work.

No matter the outcome, if you've prepared the steps and presented the problems and solutions, **YOU ARE A WINNER.**

Take that winner's attitude to reflect on the process.

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

You've planned, practiced, and presented your self-advocacy persuasive speech. How did it go?

- What went well?
  
- What was difficult?

Were your goals achieved? Were you successful in getting what you needed?

If you didn't receive your entire goal, what piece did you achieve?  
Is that sufficient?

Did the teacher or coach help you achieve your goal as much as possible?  
If not, is there someone else you can ask for help?

What is your next self-advocacy plan for this issue?

- Were other barriers mentioned you need to address?
- Are there other resources you need to identify?
- How will you go about addressing these concerns?

What was the impact on your life (and the lives of others) because  
you self-advocated?

Do you see the value in the self-advocacy process? Where will you use it again?

Do you feel confident in your self-advocacy skills? Where do you think you need more practice?

Jade enrolled in an eight-week introductory gymnastics program. Prior to beginning the program, she met with the instructors and explained what she can see and taught them the suggested modifications. These included tactile markings on the floor, bars, and beam, a mat leading up to the vault, a sound source on the tumbling mat for direction, and a peer model for new moves so she can see what they are doing at a close proximity.

Upon completion of the program, Jade met with the studio director again to discuss her progress. They agreed to continue with her training and Jade signed up for another session.

The gymnastics studio owner is now investigating hiring coaches who have a background in adapted physical education so they can accommodate other athletes with special needs.

Jade is flying.

Sean is now a senior and has helped his team for four years and his personal times keep improving. Running at college is his next goal.

## What If I Didn't Get What I Wanted?

The truth is we rarely get everything we want. But that should not stop us from trying.

*"The power of sport had an immense impact on my life. My experience through sport set me on a path to become a six-time Paralympian and five-time Paralympic medalist. You can too!"*

~ Lisa Czechowski, US Paralympic goalball player

### MEET JAMEL

Jamel is a 7th grader who has retinitis pigmentosa. He asked his physical education teacher, Mrs. Klein, to have a peer tutor so he would not have to be partners with her. (Knowledge of Self)

Mrs. Klein was so nervous Jamel would get hurt that she was not willing to let him have a peer tutor.

He asked for a meeting of his IEP team so that he could remedy this situation. He practiced his speech and all the reasons why he wanted to work with a peer and not the teacher. (Knowledge of Rights)

At the IEP, Mrs. Klein had so much anxiety that it spread to his parents. They were worried about him getting hurt or losing more vision. They compromised and the school provided a teacher's aide to be partners with him. (Communication)

Jamel had a voice, and he used it. The outcome was not what he wanted, but it was a beginning.

You didn't get what you wanted now what?

- How far are you from what you wanted?
- Who helped you with this situation in the past? Can you go back to them?
- Ask them who else can help you.
- What is a next step to get you closer to your goal?
- Practice your speech. Make a strong case. Explain that you will continue to fight for what you want as long as it takes.

### **JAMEL DID NOT GIVE UP**

Jamel wasn't done self-advocating. He wanted to be paired with a peer in physical education. Before his next IEP meeting, he shared with his teachers, parents, and the special education director that he wanted the situation in physical education to change.

By now Mrs. Klein had seen several lessons where Jamel was successful. She felt a bit more comfortable. The high school was attached to the middle school. She had some very good students on her lacrosse team who were in 10th grade. She suggested they come over to her class during their study hall to be peer tutors.

For Jamel this was much better than being paired with an adult aide. He still wants a same-age peer but he's closer to his goal and he will not give up.

## Finding Solutions Before the Problem Exists

Carlos was about to turn 13 and he was excited to take his friends to play laser tag. Kids with a variety of visual acuities were invited. The reservation was made. The cake bought. The excitement built.

Finally, the big day arrived. He and his buddies climbed into his mother's van and off they went to shoot each other with lasers.

When they arrived, the manager was unaware the group included children with visual impairments. He had no idea how to accommodate them. And, honestly, he was a little freaked by the idea. How exactly did he accommodate the kids? What if one of the kids got hurt? The manager was a ball of anxiety and couldn't see past the problems.

Carlos, deflated, became angry. After all, he thought, there are laws about accommodating people and this guy should figure it out.

Ultimately, Carlos and his friends were not able to play laser tag.

*Could this have been prevented?*

While it's true the laser tag place was required to make accommodations, Carlos could have been proactive in helping the manager do just that. Carlos could have discussed his and his friends' needs when he made the reservation. Together they could have determined what needed to happen so Carlos could shoot his friends with lasers. Instead, everyone went away upset.

Remember most people do want to be supportive but we have to give them the chance. And, yes, it's true that there are laws governing accommodating special needs. But everyone is not aware of these laws, and most don't have any idea how to make the accommodations beyond a wheelchair ramp and larger doorways.

Be proactive and give people the chance to help you by helping them. It's a win-win. You teach someone about accommodation and then they accommodate.

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Is there a time you could have thought ahead, had a conversation, and made accommodating for you easier?

Do you have anything in the future where you might need to speak about accommodation before it turns into a problem?

## **Don't Stop Now! Dream!**

The beauty of all you just learned and applied, is that it can be used time and time again. It's a method that reaches far beyond the playing field. It is time to dream about your next steps.

### Guiding Questions

Think into your future, where do you see these skills being helpful?

- Is there another goal you would like to achieve right now?
- Are you ready to prepare your persuasive speech and make that appointment? If not, what's stopping you?
- Envision and document your next steps. Set yourself a deadline.

Think beyond yourself. Do you want to start a beep baseball team in your community? Do you want to teach others how to self-advocate? Do you want to make a change at school?

*“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” ~ Harriet Tubman, abolitionist*

### **Meet Maria**

Maria is blind and a college student studying to be a teacher. Maria is very independent and has a guide dog. She has faced many barriers along the journey in her education classes, student teaching, and navigating her college campus. She, too, had to learn self-advocacy skills and below are some of her many successes.

Her professor required the students to submit their lesson plans on a template with boxes her screen reader could not navigate. She showed the problem to her professor and asked to use another lesson plan format.

Not only did the professor change the format for Maria, but the professor also changed it for everyone.

When she was student teaching, she needed support to know what was happening in the classroom. After much discussion and persuasion, Maria was provided with a visual interpreter. Now she knows what’s going on in the classroom from moment to moment.

Maria’s student teaching assignment was thirty-minutes from campus. She was also proactive about getting transportation. Her advocacy resulted in a community of volunteer drivers.

Lastly, Maria and her guide dog had a tough time navigating the massive construction project in the middle of campus. She had to advocate to get additional mobility lessons in order to learn the constantly changing pathways from her dorm to her classes.

Luckily, Maria was resilient and positive. She is now in a doctoral program to be a professor so she can help others teach children how to advocate just like she did. Her advocacy paid off!

## It's Your Turn to Lead

Denzel Washington once said, "At the end of the day it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished... it's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It's about what you've given back."

Where can you give back?

- You could help match guides with runners with visual impairments in your school district.
- You could partner with the athletic director to help include even more students in after school activities and sports.
- You could put together a group of experts who have supported you along the way to help teachers or coaches be more inclusive.
- You could become a counselor to kids younger than you.
- You could put together a persuasive speech club.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

Come up with five ways you might be able to give back.

1

2

3

4

5

How can you become a self-advocate leader? Who can you share this with?

*Everyone can be great because everyone can serve.*  
~ Martin Luther King, Jr., Civil Rights Activist

## MEET GRIFFIN

### FOUNDER OF THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE FOUNDATION

When Griffin was in college, they didn't really have any students who attended the university with a visual impairment or blindness. They didn't really know how to get him the right tools to be successful at college. It was difficult for them to understand what he needed.

His first year in college, it didn't matter how much he advocated for himself because Griffin didn't have the best person in the Academic Achievement Center to help him. He didn't have the right person in the place to get his message across and allow him to get the right accommodations.

When a Phil joined the Academic Achievements Center, things turned around. He took the time to understand Griffin, and the other students. Phil made sure they got what they needed.

Griffin's overall experience in college became better because of Phil's support. He was better able to do the work, read the material, and he had the tools that were necessary to graduate in 4 years.

Griffin is now the face of The Foreseeable Future Foundation and an elite para-cyclist.

Griffin is also one of the leaders on the Self-Advocacy Playbook you hold in your hands.

# Resources

## **LAVELLE SPORT MODIFICATION MASTER LIST**

Take the sports and activities specific to your camp and make your own packet for your athletes to take with them. If you have other sports to add to this master list, please email the Camp Abilities Brockport Graduate Assistants and they can assist you.

Email: [campabilitiesbrockport01@gmail.com](mailto:campabilitiesbrockport01@gmail.com)

Universal approaches:

- 1) Feel tactile board of sport courts and all equipment prior to activity (pre-teaching).
- 2) Learn all terms and vocabulary for the sport.
- 3) Use tactile modeling or physical guidance along with verbal assistance for skill development for each sport.
- 4) Ask the athlete their preference for equipment and rule modifications.

Modifications	Comments
Rubber tee or tee with a spring (hitting)	
Batting gloves with Velcro (hitting)	
Poly spots or carpet squares (hitting stance)	
Consistent pitch technique (live pitch hitting)	
Variation in bat choices	
Guide runner to base	
Variation in ball choices (ones that stay in air longer, etc.)	
Constant sound source for bases	

**Track/Running Events**

Modifications	Comments
Guide runner (running)	
Tether (tether running)	
Talking pedometer or playlist for time (distance/motivation)	
100 M distance (two anchor points) (guide wire running)	
Clapping- fast to slow	
Treadmill	
Add music so they know where to run	
Guide runner in front with a bright vest	
Circle running	

**Long Jump**

Modifications	Comments
Thick gymnastic mats (for landing)	
Beeper for direction (slow to fast beeping)	
Guide wire to take-off point	
Counting steps to take-off point	
Guide runner to take-off point	
Sound source at take-off point	
Bright color contrast at take-off point (cones possibly)	
Tactile markers near board	
Changes in textures on ground	

**Throwing/Discus/Shot Put**

Modifications	Comments
Hula-hoop (stay inside circle)	
Use beep baseball (to hear distance)	
Softball	
Rubber mats or poly spots (for stance)	
Frisbee/taped paper plates/smaller discus	
Taped over rope on the circle (stance)	
Auditory cue for direction of throw	

Modifications	Comments
Pedal straps (keep feet in place)	
Bright fluorescent lines	
Spotter (sides of the biker)	
Adapt bike for balance (training wheels)	
Music/commands (follow sound)	
Follow sighted rider wearing bright colors	
Tandem bike	
Balance bike	

**Swimming**

Modifications	Comments
Use a physio ball or a bench to teach swim skills outside of the pool	
Different sounds for ends of pools (lap swimming)	
Goggles	
Various flotation devices	
Tapper (long stick with tennis ball or part of pool noodle on end)	
Sprinkler system for signal to the end of pool	
Use AdapTap	

**Gymnastics**

Modifications	Comments
Tactile modeling/physical guidance	
Carpet squares	
Slant mat	
Spotter (all skills)	
Low beam (balance beam)	
Wall with padding (headstand)	
Rope with tape over it at end of beam	
Sound source at vault	
Sound source at corners of mat during floor exercise	

**Low to High Ropes/Climbing**

Modifications	Comments
Proper directional cues	
Feet positioning prompting	
Go through course and feel apparatus	
Tactile board	
Spotters with hands up	
Simulate on the ground - practice movements first	

Modifications	Comments
Physical guidance with verbal description	
Taped line boundaries	
Poly spots/carpet squares (teaching equipment)	
Task analyze each move (skill)	

**Goalball**

Modifications	Comments
Sound from direction to throw (throwing)	
Tactile modeling/physical guidance (throwing/blocking)	
Ready position on knees	
Feel entire court	
Slow ball down	
Modified or smaller goalball	
Verbal description of what is happening during game	

**Disc Golf**

Modifications	Comments
Discs with sound sources	
Sound sources at targets	

**Archery**

Modifications	Comments
Coach Assist with Aiming	
Sound source at target	
High contrast color on target	
Consistent cadence	
Orientation between target and where to shoot	
Different strengths of bow and arrows	
Different strengths of bow and arrows	

**Golf**

Modifications	Comments
Sound source at target, different sounds for different areas of target	
High contrast of targets, use of flags, cones	
Different tactile mats/surfaces to strike from	
Balls with sound source in them	
Various size balls	
Modify size of target	
Various tees	
Walk distance between the start and target (many count strides)	

Modifications	Comments
Use Dakota disc tips for shorter distances	
Use two trekking poles for longer distances	
Follow auditory signals from other hikers	
Download detailed instructions for hike (mileage, turns, landmarks) prior to hike	
Hip tether to guide	

**Kayaking/Canoeing**

Modifications	Comments
Tandem kayaks	
Follow sound source from a lead kayak	
Tactile paddles and where hand grip should be	
Tactile kayak and canoes	
High contrast colors for any landmarks (if possible)	

**Basketball**

Modifications	Comments
Use cane to feel basketball rim, backboard and rim	
Use a cane to tap rim for directional cue (Can also use a beeper or a doorbell)	
Tactile board of basketball court	
Physical guidance (shooting)	
Two-handed dribble to start	
Point system (1-hitting net, 2- hitting backboard, 3-hitting rim, 4-making contact with square, 5-basket)	
Human guide during a game	
Practice tapping tabletop first to establish consistency	
Different sound at mid court to know player has crossed over	
Remote controlled portable sound source	
Smaller or bigger ball	

## Stand Up Paddleboarding

Modifications	Comments
Sound source on land for orientation, or at buoys	
Various size boards and types (stability)	
Sitting on board	
Kneeling on board	
Make the board tactile and where feet should go	
Handle location on the board for body positioning	
Taping the paddle for hand position or adding a tactile band for hand positioning	
Bells on the leaders paddle to follow	
Short direct verbal commands: left side, right side, sweep front to back, sweep back to front, forward stroke right side, forward stroke left side, brake, come to your knees	
Leash as a guide to where the back of the board is if they fall	

**EQUIPMENT RESOURCES:**

Beep baseball  
[www.nbba.org](http://www.nbba.org)

Basketball, soccer, football, volleyball with bells  
<http://www.braillebookstore.com/Bell-Basketball.1>

Trainer goalballs  
[https://www.athleteshop.com/goalball-trainer-ball-23-cm?as=athlete&kwd\\_id=22219-AGI-31268444333-ASI-176381432709-ASU545KO1F&gclid=CM-zl6af2ptQCFQGQaQodljMAiw](https://www.athleteshop.com/goalball-trainer-ball-23-cm?as=athlete&kwd_id=22219-AGI-31268444333-ASI-176381432709-ASU545KO1F&gclid=CM-zl6af2ptQCFQGQaQodljMAiw)

Goalballs  
<https://app.etapestry.com/cart/UnitedStatesAssociationofB/default/category.php?ref=451.0.372404251>

Swimming tapper sprinkler AdaptTap  
 Annie Foos, 419-508-1362, foosannie@gmail.com

Portable Sound Source, Sport Edition (with remote) APH  
<https://www.aph.org/product/portable-sound-source-sport-edition/>

**ROLE MODELS:**

Swimming

- Brad Snyder

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brad\\_Snyder\\_\(swimmer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brad_Snyder_(swimmer))

- Martha Ruether

<https://www.teamusa.org/usparaswimming/athletes/Martha-Ruether>

- Trischa Zorn

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trischa\\_Zorn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trischa_Zorn)

## Track & Field

- Lex Gillette

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lex\\_Gillette](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lex_Gillette)

- Marla Runyan

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marla\\_Runyan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marla_Runyan)

- Pam Magonigle

<https://www.usaba.org/about-us/hall-of-fame-recipient/pam-mcgonigle/>

## Biking

- Griffin Pinkow

<https://observer.com/2018/03/foreseeable-future-foundation-helps-the-blind-through-sports/>

## TEACHER CONCERNS AND RESPONSES

Don't hesitate to reach out if you need other suggestions.

Teacher's Concerns	Student's Possible Responses
I don't want you to get hurt.	I have the right to play and possibly get hurt like all of my friends. This is called "The Dignity of Risk" and I choose to participate and take that risk just like everyone else.
I don't want the sighted students to get hurt.	I have modifications that would minimize that possibility. For example -have an auditory cue for each person on defense and make a tactile marking in order for me to know my boundaries. You could also provide a guide during a game.
I don't have that equipment.	Here is a list of different local and online stores that have all of the equipment. You could also talk to my vision or mobility teacher for more ideas.
I don't want the other students to have to slow down their game play.	It is possible for students to still gain skill development and exercise when the game is slower. Excluding me teaches the other kids in class that it is ok to leave me on the sidelines. I don't think that is a good concept to learn at school.
We don't have the money for that.	There is some free equipment and resources available through the American Printing House for the Blind. You can order this through my vision teacher. Also, if you write it into my IEP then the school has to pay for it.

Teacher's Concerns	Student's Possible Responses
I don't have the training to help you.	I can help you and tell you what I need. In addition, here is a list of online resources. There are also many free video tutorials for specific sports and different teaching techniques.
I don't know that game.	I can teach it to you as I play it every summer at my camp. In addition, here is a list of free video tutorials to help you learn that game.
People who are blind can't do that sport.	There are many blind athletes who do this sport at an elite level. Here are some links to videos so you can see them in action!

## Self-Advocacy Selected Questions

If you have not worked through the I HOPE! I CAN! I WILL! Self-Advocacy Playbook, please do so before attempting these questions.

This is not all the questions provided in the manual. It is a select few to guide you on a new self-advocacy journey.

Where do you need to self-advocate?

- What do you want to change or achieve?
  
- What is your goal for this self-advocacy process?

Why is this important to you?

Who or what is preventing you from achieving this goal? Who do you need to speak with?

How, specifically, can this activity be accommodated to fit your needs? Consider the rules, the setting, the equipment, etc. Spend a lot of time here. Think of everything you possibly can.

Who can help you? Who can be on your support team?

After you've prepared and presented, what went well? What was difficult?

Was there something else you needed to address? When will you do that?

## **Persuasive Speech Blank Script**

The more prepared you are, the easier speaking up for yourself will be. Even the greatest speakers prepare notes and practice. Use this blank script to guide your thoughts and discussion.

An example script is in this Playbook.

### **Step 1: Introduce Yourself**

Don't forget to say thanks and explain the reason you wanted to meet.

### **Step 2: Make it Personal**

You have real reasons for wanting this accommodation. Share those.

### Step 3: Explain What You Need and Anticipate Questions

This is your chance to educate. Help the coach help you. This is also a good time to get help from your support team.

### Step 4: Conclusion and Wrap-Up

Remember to say thanks again and state one more time what you need.

### Step 5: Reflect on the Outcome

How did it go? What could have gone better? What went great? What's next?



## RESOURCE PAGE

### **Camp Abilities**

<http://campabilities.org>

### **Foreseeable Future Foundation**

<https://foreseeablefuture.org>

<http://beepkickball.com>

<https://campabilitiesworld.com>



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**We all BELIEVE IN YOU.**