Talking Points for Working with Parents and Families

When working with parents and families who have concerns about sexuality education for their child, **assume best intent** and keep the focus on the experience and success of the student. Collaborate with classroom teachers and your Special Education Coordinator to ensure all therapy and IEP minutes can be met without students missing out on sexuality education.

Talking points for parent concerns:
- Emphasize the need for self-advocacy skills for all young people, but *especially* youth with disabilities
- Self-advocacy is the skill of recognizing and effectively communicating your needs
- Sexuality education supports social-emotional development and holistic identity
- All people need affection, love, intimacy, acceptance and companionship
- Appropriate sexual health education is necessary for all young people to learn about themselves, relationships, safety, and responsibility to engage safely in the world.

Maximizing Self-Advocacy

Prioritizing self-advocacy as a component of sex education offers students the chance to **practice the communication and relationship skills** that allow for the expression and respectful navigation of personal needs or preferences**,** as well as those of others. Self- advocacy is **especially important** for young people with disabilities who may face unique challenges because of personal access needs (i.e., movement support, learning modifications or assistance, support while eating, etc.) as well as societal attitudes around disability.

Self-advocacy is important for **all** young people in learning how to:
- Speak up for themselves
- Make their own decisions about their lives
- Gain access to information so that they can explore their interests
- Find out who will support them
- Know their rights and responsibilities
- Reach out to others when they need help and to assist with problem-solving.

Resource to share: [Sexual Health Education for Young People with Disabilities - Research](#) [and Resources for Parents/Guardians - Advocates for Youth](#)

If you experience...	Try...
Sex ed isn't relevant for my child due to ability/barriers/access needs	Students with disabilities have the right to make decisions about their body and their relationships Gaps in sexual health knowledge can put people with disabilities at increased risk
Info about sexual health will be confusing for my child due to access needs and support personnel	Abuse may be more difficult to detect in someone with a disability who may experience greater barriers to care Young people with disabilities must practice skills to self-advocate for their boundaries and comfort, especially with care professionals
Sex ed isn't necessary for my child because I/their aid will be present to advocate on their behalf	Students with disabilities must often interact with caregivers, medical professionals, and other adults, and need the skills to self-advocate. Disability does not inherently negate a person's right to make decisions about their body and their relationships
Sex ed isn't necessary for my child because they have more pressing health concerns	The knowledge and skills to talk about the body and wellness can help keep people as safe and healthy as possible.
Whatever you are teaching to the rest of your students won't be accessible/appropriate for my child	Be specific about the ways you are adapting lessons so that you can provide a safe and inclusive environment that supports everyone
My child doesn't need information about reproductive health because they cannot/will not/should not have children	Students with disabilities have the right to make decisions about reproduction and reproductive health People with disabilities have the same rights to decide to have a child as a person who does not have a disability. People with disabilities can be good parents and have the ability to be successful in raising a child Both able and disabled people can have an equal chance of having a non-disabled or disabled child