

# ***How to Encourage Self Advocacy***

*By: Robert M. Tudisco, Esq.*

## **Do not hide the AD/HD diagnosis from your children.**

As early as possible, discuss AD/HD with your children. Encourage them to understand themselves and their needs. This is also an excellent way to learn about your children's disability from their point of view.

## **Involve your children in designing accommodations.**

Speak openly with your children and ask them to articulate the specific challenges they face in school and suggest what will help them. This will give you a factual basis for requesting the accommodation and it will empower your children to understand that their opinion is valuable and that they can make a difference.

## **Bring your children to team meetings.**

Depending on the age of maturity of your children, their presence at the meeting can be helpful. It will educate them on the process and help summarize the setting, while keeping the adults focused on the goal. This is especially important in developing a transition plan as children get older. The transition meeting can be a way of passing the torch of advocacy to your children as they approach college or vocational training.

## **Set up a game plan with your children for college.**

Work with your children before starting college to understand the differences between high school and college and help them prepare for the transition. The game plan should include the following.

- Make sure they know where the disability office is.
- Encourage them to articulate their particular needs and familiarize themselves with appropriate services and accommodations.
- Encourage them to seek a coach or mentor to help them set up their own structural support and accountability system.

Help them set up a local support with a therapist and/ or psychiatrist to manage medication away from home. This is particularly important as their age and changing environment may affect their