

The Arc Kent County provides advocacy support on three levels:

- **Families and parents of children with disabilities from birth to age 18 on Individual Education Programs (IEP's)**
- Parents may need assistance with:
  - Attending an IEP team meetings
  - Attending a MET (Multidisciplinary Education Team) meeting when evaluation results are being presented.
  - Comprehensive record reviews
  - Suspension, Manifestation Determinations or Expulsions
  - Disenrollment in a school
  - Meetings with parents who have special needs themselves
  - Services refused/denied or improper placements
  - Participation in a mediation.
  - Participation in a Due Process Hearing
- **Young Adults in transition to adulthood ages 18 to 29 including those no longer in school.**
  - Assistance with providing resources to establish independence and growing skills.
  - Alternatives to Guardianship
  - Explore options for postsecondary education and training
  - Explore options for Community Mental Health services.
  - Rights and responsibilities (Age of Majority)
  - Information on Youth in Transition who experienced Foster Care
- **Adult Advocacy for those striving for independence or alongside caregivers.**
  - Empower individuals to be able to advocate for themselves
  - Disability Rights
  - Information on Adult Services Agencies
  - Person Centered Planning
  - Information on Self-Determination & Direct Employer options
  - Representative Payee
  - Information on Michigan Department of Health & Human Services
  - Health and Wellness Resources
  - Disability specific resources

It is our passion to serve members with disabilities in our community through advocacy within the context of our current law and regulations, rules, policies and best practices. Education advocacy provides guidance based on the parameters of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), alongside best practices for special education. In addition, our Adult Advocacy also relies on the ADA and other legislation, as well as best practices for promoting opportunities for independence among adults with disabilities.

It is our goal to empower parents, families and people with disabilities with the knowledge and resources to help them effectively advocate for themselves. Even though the law is the foundation for what we do in advocacy, we are not a legal service and do not provide legal advice.

In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for those that contact us for advocacy we work collaboratively with all parties and use this approach to problem solve in order to foster healthy and positive relationships.