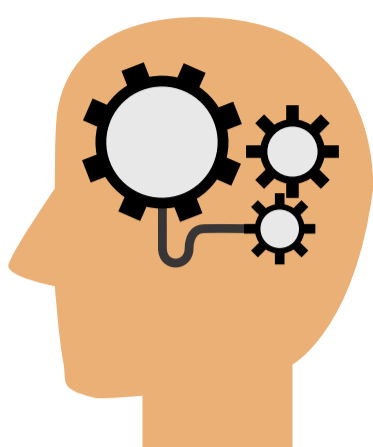


ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF

UNDERSTAND YOUR WAY OF LEARNING



- Know the strategies that help you succeed and the accommodations that bypass your limitations.
- Be informed about your learning difference and be able to explain it in language that is easy to understand.
- Get past initial fears and denial and become thoroughly familiar with assessments of your learning.
- Be attuned to your own experiences.

Be able to reflect on both your successes and limitations.

PRACTICE COMMUNICATING

- Learn how to make clear requests and back them up with explanations.
- Role-playing different situations and putting together the needed information in advance will build confidence.



Your manner of communication can create allies or leave others confused or defensive.

IDENTIFY SUPPORTERS



You need to know people:

- whom you can trust
- with whom you can comfortably share experiences
- from whom you can seek advice

These supporters are a crucial life-long resource for you.

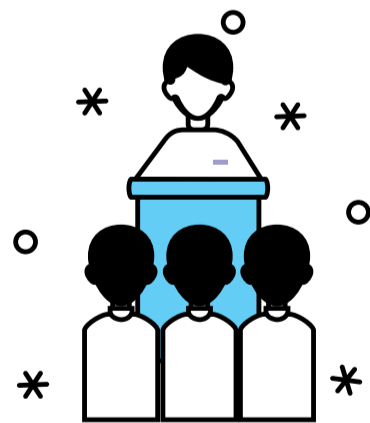
MEET WITH TEACHERS & COUNSELORS

- You can get useful feedback and create a plan for improvement.
- Your participation in creating your IEP, 504 or other personal education plan will let you provide your own perspective and hear the reasoning behind the recommendations.



You can practice your self-advocacy skills for future workplace and other situations.

EDUCATE OTHERS



- Many people will be uninformed or misinformed about learning differences.
- Peers may be curious, teachers may be unprepared, and employers may be hesitant.
- Perhaps you can help to improve the situation for the next person in your shoes.

Each conversation will help sharpen your self-advocacy skills.

KEEP THINKING

- As your life circumstances change, your challenges and satisfactions will also evolve.
- Reflect on both positive and negative experiences, looking for concrete methods of improvement.



Self-evaluation is often your greatest source of insight.

Ferguson, Kathy, *A Resource Guide About Dyslexia for People in Hawai'i*, (HI: Hawai'i Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, 2018)

KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

IDEA



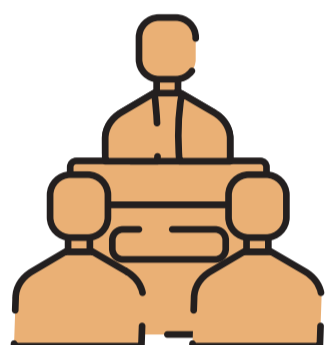
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a U.S. education law guaranteeing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities throughout the United States of America.
- IDEA also ensures special education and related services for these eligible children.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

- A civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of a disability in programs that receive federal funding.
- Schools develop formal 504 plans to provide kids with disabilities (including learning differences such as dyslexia) the support they need and to protect their rights in school.



AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)



- A civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, public services, and accommodations.
- Children with learning differences as well as other challenges are protected from discrimination by this law in school and elsewhere (e.g., public places such as parks, restaurants and other businesses).

IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE UNDER ANY OF THESE LAWS, YOU HAVE CERTAIN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- If you have an IEP and receive special education services, you are protected under **IDEA** until you graduate from high school or reach age 22.
- **Section 504** and **ADA** protect you against discrimination in college by providing for reasonable accommodations.
- In the world of work, you are most likely protected under **ADA**.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

IN HIGH SCHOOL, your IEP will include an Individual Transition Plan (ITP).

- Make sure you take part in the preparation of the ITP.
- Use the ITP to gain specific assistance.

IN COLLEGE, counselors from the campus learning disabilities center can help you think through your next steps.

- Colleges and universities are not allowed to ask you if you have a disability.
- If you decide to disclose that you have a learning difference, work with the college counselors to review your documentation and arrange for accommodations.



VOCATIONAL COUNSELORS can help you anticipate your employment and career needs.

- They can help you to develop a plan to move smoothly from high school to college, trade schools or directly to employment.

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