

Self-Advocacy Scripts and Tips: Practice Scripts

Why this matters:

When children can describe their strengths, needs, and strategies, they gain confidence and build lifelong self-advocacy skills. This isn't about "fixing" challenges, it's about giving kids the language to own who they are and ask for what they need.

Examples

Early Elementary (Ages 6–8)

Goal: Simple, concrete, and often shared with a trusted adult nearby.

- "Hi, I'm [Name]. I'm really good at [strength/interest]."
- "Sometimes I need help with [specific need] because [brief reason]."
- "It helps me when [one clear support]."

Example: "Hi, I'm Kai. I'm really good at building things with Legos. Sometimes I need help starting my writing because it's hard to get my ideas down. It helps when I can talk about them first."

Tip for Parents: Let kids share this with a drawing or picture card if verbalizing feels hard.

Upper Elementary / Middle School (Ages 9–12)

Goal: Build more detail and self-awareness, encourage independent delivery.

- "I learn best when [describe strength-based learning style]."
- "I sometimes struggle with [challenge] because [reason]."
- "It really helps when [specific accommodation]."

Example: "I learn best when I can see examples and have time to practice. I sometimes struggle with staying focused when it's really noisy because I get distracted by sounds. It helps when I can wear my headphones or work in a quieter space."

Tip for Parents: Practice at home by role-playing introductions to new teachers before the school year starts.

High School (Ages 13+)

Goal: Foster ownership, self-advocacy, and collaborative problem-solving.

- “I’ve learned that I work best when [describe strategy].”
- “I notice I can get stuck when [challenge or situation].”
- “One way we could make this work better is [propose solution/accommodation].”

Example: “I’ve learned I work best when I can break big assignments into smaller parts with checkpoints. I notice I get stuck when I’m not sure where to start. One way we could make this work better is if I could check in with you briefly before I begin to make sure I’m on track.”

Tip for Parents: Encourage teens to email or meet with teachers directly, with you as a support if needed, but resist stepping in unless asked.

Fill It In

Early Elementary (6–8)

- “Hi, I’m _____. I’m really good at _____.
Sometimes I need help with _____ because _____.
It helps me when _____.”

Upper Elementary / Middle School (9–12)

- “I learn best when _____.
I sometimes struggle with _____ because _____.
It really helps when _____.”

High School (13+)

- “I’ve learned that I work best when _____.
I notice I can get stuck when _____.
One way we could make this work better is _____.”

Low Pressure Ways to Share

- ☐ Draw a picture or comic strip of yourself learning.
- ☐ Make a bullet-point list to give to your teacher.
- ☐ Record an audio or short video message.
- ☐ Role-play at home with a parent or sibling.