

Resource 14

Unpacking 'Advocacy'

What does advocacy mean to you?

Write down your understanding of the word 'advocacy' in the box.

Dictionary Search:

Locate a definition of the word 'advocacy' in your dictionary.

Write it in the space below:

Thesaurus Search:

Use a thesaurus to locate synonyms for the word 'advocacy'.

Write them in the box below:

Resource 14

What is an advocate?

An advocate is generally understood to be a person who pleads the cause of another, but it is possible to advocate on behalf of yourself.

When people think of advocates they generally think of people like...

- lawyers
- judges
- social workers/counsellors

But... anyone can act as an advocate. This means children, teachers, parents, doctors, nurses, men, women, old people, young people, disabled people, sports lovers, stamp collectors, even **you!**

How do community members act as advocates?

This table describes some community members involved in advocacy. It describes who these individuals advocate for, and some of the ways in which they might engage in advocacy. Can you think of other ways in which these people might act as advocates and add them to the table? Try to think of some other individuals or groups that might act as advocates, and fill in a new row for each.

Community Member	Advocates for	Advocates by	Advocacy Type
Politician	Members of their electorate	Responding to individual or group complaints and concerns	Individual advocacy
	Ministerial Portfolio (eg: Environmental interests)	Developing policies and laws	Group advocacy
Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian	Children and young people (Individuals and groups)	Checking policies are fair for children and young people Making sure that children's services do their job properly Lobbying government departments on behalf of individuals and groups	Group advocacy Individual advocacy
Parent of a disabled child wishing to go to a mainstream school	Their child	Speaking to school principals Writing letters to the Department of Education or to the Minister for Education Making a complaint to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Starting a court case	Individual advocacy

children's rights, children's lives

A module of study developed by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

Disabled child wishing to go to a mainstream school	Themselves	Talking to his/her parents Meeting with principals Communicating with the Department of Education or the Minister for Education	Self-advocacy

Resource 14

Advocacy:

To plead in favour of; support or urge by argument; recommend publicly.

(The Macquarie Concise Dictionary, 1998).

- Advocacy is working to bring about change
- Advocacy involves trying to make things better
- Advocacy requires empathy, understanding and effort
- Advocacy means striving for justice for individuals or groups

Some of the different types of advocacy that people may become involved in are:

Self-advocacy:

Self-advocacy is when a person makes a decision about something which is important to them, then works on their own behalf to bring about a change for the better.

Individual advocacy:

Individual advocacy means working for positive change on behalf of another person.

Group advocacy:

Group advocacy involves working towards a positive change for a group of people who share a common concern or interest. Individuals can advocate on behalf of groups, or groups can work together to advocate for themselves or others. This form of advocacy is sometimes called 'cause' advocacy.

Systems advocacy:

Systems advocacy involves attempting to influence political, social and service systems to make them more responsive to the concerns of individuals or groups.

Legal advocacy:

Legal advocacy is working for change by using systems of law. Lawyers, police and other legal professionals use legal advocacy to try and achieve positive outcomes for individuals and groups.

Sources:

New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People (2001). *Advocacy: Speak up, speak out*. Sydney: NSW CCYP

Physical Disability Council of New South Wales (2003). *About advocacy: The basics*. Retrieved April 29, 2005 from <http://www.pdcnsw.org.au/students/advocacy/index.html>.