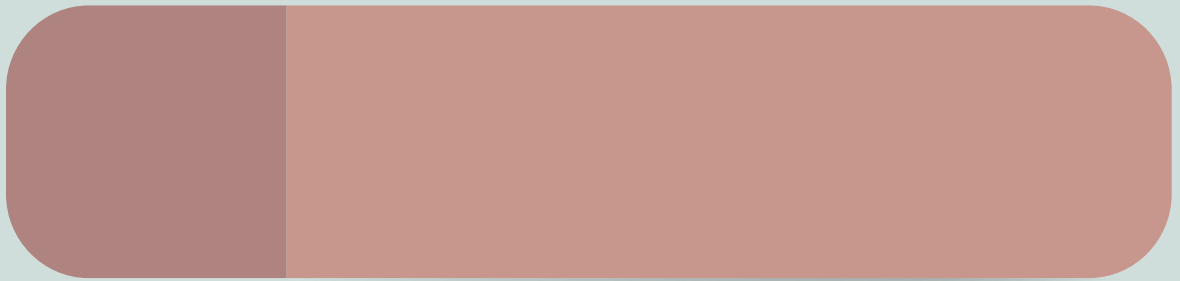


What it Means to be an advocate

How Can I Work with Others to Include



** Notice the steps Peter's parents took to advocate for him in **bold**.*

Peter is an eight-year-old boy with autism and limited communication. From kindergarten through second grade Peter was in a classroom that served only children with disabilities. Toward the end of his second grade year his parents - Daria and Arturo - began to feel that Peter's language and social skills would develop more if he spent the day learning with children who did NOT have disabilities.

Daria and Arturo were concerned that the general education teacher could be overwhelmed by Peter's special needs. What could they, as parents, do to help the school support their son?

In April, **Daria and Arturo met with the school's principal, the special education teacher, and a third grade teacher** selected by the principal. The parents **shared their goals** for Peter's future and **what they had learned about the benefits of inclusion for children**. They wanted the school to consider Peter's abilities. They felt it would just take time for teachers and peers to understand his unique qualities and ways of learning.

While Peter was still part of the varied second-grade special education classroom, **the teachers and parents began to discuss how the same supports could be provided for Peter in the third-grade general education class**. Daria and Arturo were ready to help with establishing new routines for Peter and **offered to help problem-solve** throughout the year.

Before the end of second grade, **Daria and Arturo met with Peter's IEP team**: the exceptional and general education teachers, the speech-language therapist, and the occupational therapist. During this meeting, Daria and Arturo agreed that Peter's daily needs could be met by the teachers, therapists, and peers. **They would all work to help Peter get adjusted** to his new class schedule and routines. **The team discussed ideas** for helping Peter learn what his peers would be learning. **They agreed to meet again two weeks after school started** to see how things were working.

Although things didn't always go as smoothly as everyone had planned, Peter made significant learning gains and acquired many new friends during his year in the general third-grade classroom.

Fostering Achievement and Commu

