

# Suffolk Region



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## **Special Education Report** **January 2019**

Happy New Year!! This month's report will focus on the effect that having a learning disability, whether due to a cognitive learning disability or a physical disability has on the student from the student's point of view. As parents we are told that we "need to be an advocate for our children". As true as this is, it is as equally important that the child become their own advocate as well. It is very important that as parents we need to educate our children about whatever disability they may have. First we must do this by utilizing proper age appropriate language so that the child may understand. It is important that all parties work together for the betterment of the child. This team includes their medical professionals, administrators and their special services team in their school district/ at home to help navigate the frustrating process of getting services for a student and encouraging the utilization of tools and skills that work best for them. This will help facilitate a more successful journey. .

In an article from Education Weekly (dated 12/5/18- "A Special Education Students Speaks: Dealing with the Ups and Downs) student Ella Griffith-Tager spoke of the inconsistencies of special education from year to year, from school to schools. She described the years where the teaching was excellent and she prospered those years and the years that the teaching was lacking how she struggled so much in school that she did not want to attend and was home schooled twice. She spoke how one teacher constant broke her IEP, despite suggestions from the student on how she could learn better. Ms. Griffith-Tager, diagnosed with dyslexia at an early age stated "I wish when I told teachers that I was dyslexic they would not change their voice tone or make a face or seem to pity me- because I learn differently". Sometimes the teachers, administrators and even parents need to listen to the child.

In another article also from Education Weekly ( dated 12/5/18- A Special Education Student Speaks: "When Misconceptions and Ignorance Raise Barriers), student Darya Iranmanesh spoke on how the misconceptions and ignorance added to the hurdles special education students already deal with. Ms. Iranmanesh detailed her hurdles with being a visually impaired student whose needs were quite minor ( needing to sit in the front of the class or the need to be in the front of her dance class so she could learn the dance steps), but were not met. The article goes on to describe how most students with a physical disability, do not necessarily have a learning or behavioral challenges, all are lumped together in the same special education system. Ms. Iranmanesh stated "In health class we are taught about topics like mental illness, sex education and other information pertaining to our bodies. Although, it is a great start, it does not educate about physical disabilities." By teaching students about physical problems such as blindness, deafness, students who have mobility disabilities (using a wheel chair, walker or leg braces), it will teach students to successfully interact with those who are different and it's not something to be afraid of.

As we know, children who are in special education, for either learning or physical disability learn things differently. It does not mean that they cannot learn. These articles were very informative, as advocates for students and their families it is important to teach the children about their disability. Remember every child is unique and therefore no two (2) students with any disability are the same. The disability is tailored to that specific child and what works for one, may not work for another even if diagnosed with the same disability. Ask the questions" does this way work for you?", "how can we help make this easier for you?" Without even realizing it, the student will soon become the teacher and teach all those involved.