



21¹NEXT COMMUNITIES

5 RESOURCES

Autism Housing Network

<https://www.autismhousingnetwork.org>

The ARC

<https://thearc.org/>

Disability Resources in Your Area

<https://www.usa.gov/disability-programs>

Virtual Adult Day Program

<https://adultsinmotion.org/virtual/>

Disability Rights Texas

<https://www.disabilityrightstx.org/en/home/>

INTRODUCTION

I am an advocate for special needs family members. I knew at a young age that I wanted to be a special education teacher after watching families fight the system for equal treatment of their children, this led me into teach special education as a profession.

I continue advocating for children and educators through my work. I help support educators with the struggles they face daily while also advocating for individuals with disabilities at all stages of life. I find it increasingly difficult to access quality resources for adults with disabilities. It is one of the many reasons I continue to advocate for adults with disabilities who often can't advocate for themselves.

5 TIPS



1. **Self-care is a must!** Plan for time to exercise and meditate so you can disconnect and recharge. You will be a much better parent and caretaker when you are meeting your own physical, spiritual, and mental health needs.
2. **Do not be afraid to ask for help!** Everyone knows you are dealing with an overwhelming list of responsibilities. However, you will be surprised at the number of people surrounding you who are willing to help.
3. **Read, read, read about the special education process so you can be a fiercely informed advocate for your family member. DOCUMENT EVERYTHING!** Do not assume that those sitting across the table have your child's best interests in mind when making decisions. If you do not agree with the decisions, you have a right to disagree.
4. **Find support groups in your area.** These groups are filled with others who are experiencing similar challenges. Additionally, they may know other resources you might access in your community.
5. **Get to know your assigned social worker/case manager and ask for all available resources.** Social workers are a wealth of information when needing respite services or planning long-term care for your loved one.



*"Of course parenting your typical child qualifies you to judge my decisions as a special needs parent.
Do go on..."*

Jamie Womack Williams