Examining through interviews parent advocate dyad perceptions of special education representation

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Abstract The study emphasizes the necessity of investigating the special education advocate process, especially in light of academic and growth results for children. It adds that many parents need advocates to get special education services for their disabled kids, but this field is yet mostly untapped. By interviewing parent-advocate pairs, the research’s goal is to examine the special education advocacy procedure. The study used qualitative methods of study, specifically interviewing nine “parent-advocate” pairs. These pairs were chosen to offer a variety of points of view and knowledge about the advocacy for SE. In-depth information about the advocating process, the reactions of schools, and the perceived impact on child and family success were to be gathered through the interviews. The data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis to find common trends and themes. The study’s conclusions showed that family and “advocates” shared a common understanding of the SE advocating system. Participants stated the participation of an “advocate” was generally welcomed by schools. It was also observed that some schools acted combatively and showed astonishment at the appearance of an “advocate”. Parents and “advocates” agreed that advocacy had a beneficial impact on children and families’ results, despite differing opinions from schools. The summary did not precisely state how advocacy specifically affected these results. The study emphasizes the significance of the SE advocating method and its alleged favourable effects on success for children and families. The results show that although there have been instances of hostile responses, schools frequently react favourably to “advocates”. However, both “advocates” and children thought that advocacy had positive results. These findings highlight the need for additional study and the consequences for policy and practice. The consequences are probably expanded upon in the following section, but the overview does not include the specifics.

Keywords: school, families, children, interview, special education

1. Introduction

Confidence is essential for parents advocating for their disabled children in order to secure resources. According to the concept of self-efficacy, a person can do an action and, in a challenging situation, actually carried off that conduct. The concept of empowerment is particularly pertinent to advocacy in the context of theory of self-efficacy (Mathews et al 2023). According to, empowerment takes place in three contexts: the political (i.e., societal change), connections (i.e., the capacity to sway others), and personal (i.e., one’s own emotions of self-worth). Groups that have historically received inadequate services, such as parents of disabled children, are susceptible to disempowerment in all three contexts (Burke et al 2019). Parents of young people with impairments, in particular, encounter disempowerment when advocating for their own kid, another family, or structural improvements in personal, interpersonal, and social settings. Additionally, there are other structural obstacles that prevent parent involvement and empowerment (i.e., obstacles that affect almost all families). Examples include the power imbalance between parents and schools and the median level of procedural protections. People may resort to SE “advocates” as a consequence of societal hurdles. A person who “advocates” on someone else’s or a cause’s behalf is known as an “advocate” (Potcher et al 2020). SE advocacy instruction have become more widespread in order to create “advocates”. Research on advocacy trainings has so far indicated that these programs may boost knowledge, empowerment. Therefore, the majority of investigation has been done exclusively with “advocates”, not the families they serve, because the majority of studies have concentrated solely on the effect of “advocacy” training on the “advocate” (Wood et al 2022). However, the goal of “advocacy” is to enhance conditions for family of disabled children. Therefore, this study’s goal was to investigate the “advocacy” manage in “advocate-family” pairs, as well as the impact of advocating.
The rest of this paper are as follow: part 2 literature review Part 3 contains the proposed method explained. Part 4 includes the results and analysis. While Part 5 discusses the conclusions.

2. Literature Review

The study expands our knowledge of the role that relationship diagnosis and family assessments can have in both the avoidance and management of psychotic disorders in family (Roca et al 2020). A control group was chosen by deliberate no probabilistic choosing in a quasi-experimental design. The outcomes enabled us to emphasize the need of employing family evaluation techniques while conducting family assessments and treatments (Asbury et al 2021). In accordance with the most current suggestions in the field of mental disorders, they believe that these efforts will immediately result in recovery for both patients and their families. The subjective phenomenology study’s goal was to investigate how school psychologists in Arizona perceived the requirements for SE status under ED as well as assessment techniques (Engelbrethsen et al 2020). Three school psychologists who are active members of the Arizona Association of School Psychologists (AASP) and currently working in practice participated in the research. The results showed that assessment techniques and comprehension of the eligibility criteria for ED as they are now stated in IDEA are inconsistent. Five SE teachers and five parents of children with autism spectrum disorder ASD were surveyed for the study’s data. The report suggests that school districts organize events expressly for parents of autistic students and carry out professional learning that provides teachers with evidence-based techniques for fostering collaboration with families in a public-school setting (White et al 2021). The findings of the study were utilized to compare and contrast the perspectives of interactions between SE instructors and parents of children with ASD, and to suggest ways to make corrections. They aimed to test the idea that, among parents of noncomplex children with special health care needs (CSHNC) and children without such needs (non-CSHCN), parents of CMC would have the highest probability of having poor or fair psychological conditions by Bayer et al (2021). Parents of children with CMC were most likely to report having poor or fair mental health, having trouble managing the responsibilities of parenting, and not recognizing where to turn for assistance in their local community when they ran into problems among families of kids with all degrees of child medical complication (Cooc et al 2019). In conversations with their children’s speech-language pathologists (SLPs), one who identified as Mexican American and the other who identified as White American, two bilingual (Spanish/English) Latina mothers with children on the autism spectrum were examined for their cultural viewpoints and requires by Esquilon (Nieves et al 2023). Increased “advocate” abilities for the moms were demonstrated in post-interview written reflections, and improved communication style understanding for the SLPs was demonstrated. The study’s goal was to comprehend adult sibling relationships from the viewpoints of both sibling groups—those with and without individuals with intellectual and developmental (IDD). They investigated eight mature sibling dyads’ viewpoints using dyadic interview (Rossetti et al 2023). In the United States, the study was carried out. Themes inside and across dyads were found utilizing continuous comparison and cross-case analysis of the information. According to the study, sibling connections and settings are perceived similarly by people with IDD and siblings. The essay starts out by providing a brief overview of the Family as Faculty (FAF) concept, its execution in SE teacher preparation programs, and the manner in which it has been consciously rethought to incorporate historically excluded and minority families Santamaria (Graff et al 2020). As a long-term initiative, FAF might support the demolition of deficit-driven pre-service educator views of families and the development of critical conscience geared toward equitable transformation for both kids and their parents (Hurwitz et al 2022). For us, it seems sense to assume that the likelihood of transformative change and long-lasting effects increases with the number of essential and entire connections that take place (Buren et al., 2020). The meta-synthesis gathered opinions on home-school partnerships from families of disabled children in underrepresented communities The majority of the study on the cooperative experiences of families of disabled children from non-dominant cultures has used qualitative techniques. Critical race theory-based research on social equivalency has a transformative ability to use the stories of parents from underrepresented populations to bring about systemic as well as structural change in the field of SE.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Nine advocacy dyads and 6 parents of disabled children who partnered with an “advocate” made up the participants. The Voluntary Advocacy Scheme (VAS) education was finished by the “advocates” between 2005 and 2022. The eligibility requirements for the “advocates” were as follows: (a) they had to be at least 18 years old; (b) they had completed the (VAS) in Illinois or Tennessee; and (c) they had to have fought for the participation in the study of the parents of a person with disabilities. Unsurprisingly, one (VAS) alumnus working for the families Centre for Training and Information (PTI) and was a “self-advocate”. Being older than 18, having laboured with a (VAS) graduates, and having a kid with disabilities were the eligibility criteria for both parents.

3.2. Recruitment
By emailing VAS students who had previously stated in another study that they had actively “advocated” for family of people with impairments, they were able to recruit people for the current investigation. An email invitation was given to 18 VAS grads explicitly. Due to timing issues (e.g., one student had moved to a different state and had to now plan the conversation; another was finishing graduate school and had no time to arrange the interview), five of the participants decided not to take part in the study. To take part in the study, interested VAS grads called the second author; each VAS student submitted the name and contact details of the relatives they had supported. The second author made contact with the family to invite them to take part in the study. Every family that was contacted consented to take part in the study. One US$10 gift card was given to each participant for finishing the interview, and another US$10 gift card was given to each participation for performing the member’s checks. Table 1. Participant Demographics to take part in the study, interested VAS grads called the second author; each VAS student submitted the name and contact details of the relatives they had supported. The second author made contact with the family to invite them to take part in the study. Every family that was contacted consented to take part in the study. One US$10 gift card was given to each participant for finishing the interview, and another US$10 gift card was given to each participation for performing the member’s checks.

Table 1 Participant Demographics to take part in the study.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Dyad</th>
<th>Advocate/Paren t</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>State</th>
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<th>Race</th>
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3.3. The VAS

Through a 33-hour course of study, the VAS equips participants to “advocate” for SE. Irrespective of their nation, everyone who took part in the VAS received the same information. Individuals gained knowledge about non-confrontational advocacy techniques and SE policies during the VAS. IEPs, assessments, based on research actions, extra school year offerings, behavioural strategies for intervention (BIPs) and control, formal conflict settlement (i.e., Due process and mediation), and the most restrictive setting were some of the subjects covered by SE policies. Examining a school students record, composing letters to the institution, arranging conferences with educational institutions, offering impact (i.e., emotional) support to family during IEP meetings, and informing families of their special study rights were some advocacy techniques.

3.4. Procedures
Using dyadic interviews, the study was able to analyse “advocate-parent” encounters and create an integrated story of the dyad. The VAS student and the family they supported were first interviewed on a private basis. The VAS graduate and his or her family were then interviewed in a pair. Participants’ information was gathered using an information sheet and an interviewing methodology. Demographics were highlighted in the data sheet. The study was intended to create perceptions about advocacy, hence social constructed reality was the epistemological stance. A comprehensive literature review on individuals of people with disabilities as well as advocacy for SE was done in order to establish the speak with regulations. A preliminary protocol was prepared using the studies in the literature and evaluated by 6 families of people with additional disabilities as three specialists in qualitative methods and SE “advocate”. For instance, they added the following query after the review: “What do you wish the “advocate” knew?” The method was then tested out with a family that was strongly supports and an “advocate”. Small adjustments were made to the procedure and demography form as a result of the pilot, such as checking that the possible answers for the demographic inquiries were appropriate. The procedure and the investigation itself had been authorized by an institution review panel after additional adjustments. The conversation the dyad, family, and advocacy followed the same format. The interview’s time and date were chosen by the participants. The entire interview process took place over a phone call. According to earlier studies, phone and personal interviews may provide the same outcomes. In order to get patient agreement and establish trust, protocols were observed. For instance, participants were reminded that their participation in the discussions had no bearing on their relationship with the VAS. In order for members to feel confident about their ideas, procedures were made to protect their identity. As an illustration, every name were changed to pseudonyms. Additionally, the participant names and contact details were kept apart from their interview summaries. The researcher explained herself, the study’s objective, and her professional and personal ties to disability and advocacy before the interview even started. The two subsequent researchers performed the interviews; they had both participated in the VAS, so they were comfortable with the material and had built familiarity with those who participated. Between 70 and 110 minutes were spent on each one. Every individual was questioned about every aspect of the process, and they were also subjected to repeated inquiries. The writers collected introspective and detailed notes throughout every conversation. All 32 interviews were taped and verbatim published. To confirm the accuracy of the transcripts for the six Spanish-language interviews, audio recordings were edited, interpreted, then back-translated.

3.5. Data Analysis

The research notes and transcriptions of interviews were coded using emerging coding and consistent analysis of comparisons, and extra sources of data (such information sheets) were triangulated. The authors read every transcription separately many times to become comfortable with the information. All text was individually encoded by the writers using a line-by-line method. Every item of information was contrasted to every other piece of information, highlighted, and annotated with a phrase. Each piece of coded language, notwithstanding its size variations, conveyed a single concept. There were 182 codes in total. As an illustration of the outcomes of advocacy, codes for adult assistance (such as signing up for the Medicare waiver and going on receiving support after the age of 18) included treatments like occupational therapy and speech therapy, transport, social stories, adult placement, fresh placement, and inclusive placement service provision. The authors put each code in the codebook once all the information had been coded. They act separately Read the information (i.e., transcribed interviews and field notes) once more and used the codebook to determine whether all the data had been correctly coded and whether any new codes needed to be entered.

In order to decide whether further codes should be provided, the developer particularly addressed the codes and sought consensus. The researchers concentrated on the bigger groups and issues after verifying the coding. The writers especially concentrated on the primary concepts for the procedure of advocacy that exhibited the most effective lobbying strategies used by the public.

For instance, according to the advocacy of effects, codes were divided into these types: increased therapies, boosted referrals, The kid improved, increased resources, improved family-school relationship, enhanced parental “advocacy”, suitable kid task, family and "advocate" keep working together, received adult assistance, enhanced parent autonomy, received augmentative and alternative AAC devices increased the targets through communication, and They looked for trends in information between the coding categories and within the codes. The authors made sure the themes were distinct by carefully going over everything. The following categories, for instance, were included in the subject of better-suited services provided as a result of advocacy: more treatment, greater assets, receiving equipment, and adult services. The authors performed a cross-case examination following the identification of the subjects found in the “Advocate-parent” couples. As a result, the results were first examined inside pairs, and subsequently between pairs. The dyads did not differ in any way from one another. The redundancy of topics shows that data overload was reached with 12 people. Having a background for why an “advocate” is needed, talking to the family, showing empathy for them, empowered them, preparing for IEP sessions, education the family, and offering continuous support were the themes for the advocacy method. The school’s reaction to advocacy was characterized by three main themes: Favourable welcome, confrontation, and astonishment. Better services being offered, better school settings, better student outcomes, and improved parent experiences were the main themes for advocacy’s results.
3.6. Reflexivity

The entire team represented specialists in the subject of impairments, with the exception of the first and third authors who were families of people with impairments. Consequently, their personal and/or professional perspectives might have aided in building connection with those involved. Before every interview, every writer gave a brief overview of her professional and personal history. Additionally, every author had preconceived notions about the undertaking. Each author specifically thought that advocating may be successful in assisting family in receiving the services they require. In order to do that, the authors practiced reflection throughout their work by outlining their observations, values, and views.

3.7. Validation and Trustworthiness

By using three different sources, doing a bad investigation, and members’ verification, believability and conformability were determined. The triangulation was achieved by using a variety of data sources (such as the advocate and relatives) and data gathering techniques (such as translations and fieldwork records). To see if the replies were identical, for instance, they examined the data from the solo and dynamic surveys. There were no variations noted. In addition to the themes found during the data evaluation, a negative case study was also performed. For instance, we looked over the field notes and transcripts to see if all “advocates” showed up for IEP meetings with family. Due to schedule issues, we discovered that Matie was the only advocate who failed to accompany a family to an IEP meeting. The people involved checked the data after it had been coded (i.e., member checked). To guarantee that the lobbying effort was fully conveyed, a summary of each interviewee’s private conversation was delivered to them. According to the responses from all participants, the topics adequately represented their views. The VAS was completed by all of the “advocates”, and they all worked with people who are families of disabled children. However, the VAS was finished by the proponents in a number of cohorts and states, including Illinois and Tennessee. Participants, who included parents and supporters, also represented a range of academic and cultural experiences. In order to allow for a variety of conclusions, the entire range of data was incorporated in that investigation.

4. Findings

4.1. The Process of Advocacy

Having a Situation where an Advocate is required - When they encountered difficulties or had disagreements with the school, all of the participating parents said they contacted an advocate. Mary stated that, for instance, “I became highly concerned about her [my daughter’s] development and so I called out to an advocate.” Mary especially stated that her child had failed to make academic progress at school and that the institution would not take her worries seriously. She called Shane, a representative, as a result. Allison contacted an “advocate” after citing similar issues with the school (Table 2).

Allison claimed that the school frequently phoned her to bring up her daughter and complained that the child was acting out. According to Allison, the principal was, Allison specifically mentioned that she had issues with the SE a coordinator the teacher, and other assistance providers in addition to the president. Allison specifically mentioned that she had issues with the SE manager, the teacher, and other assistance providers in addition to the principal.

Encountering the family - Every participant agreed that “advocates” interact with families in different ways: by calling them, meeting them one-on-one, and answering their questions.

Conversing on the phone with parents - According to users, activists first called parents to have a phone talk. “Matie”, an “advocate and parent” Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) of a kid, her paediatrician reportedly routinely referred families to her. Matie claimed, “I just called her [Irma] out of the blue and asked, ‘Hey, how are you doing? ‘After being provided Irma’s contact information. How are you guys doing? They conversed for perhaps 50 to 60 minutes. Irma recalled their meeting and said, “They discussed it [advocacy].” My child’s autism diagnosis was recently made. I knew absolutely nothing while I was talking to her.

Holding face-to-face meetings - The need of meeting in person early on in the lobbying process was brought up by the participants. After emailing Sarah, Anita, an “advocate” and the mother of a young adult with ASD, confirmed that they had met. One of Sarah’s children has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and another has ASD. The face-to-face sessions with Anita were appreciated by Sarah, who stated: “My neighbour gave me her phone number, and I emailed her and explained what I was going to be through. She immediately replied to my message and said, ‘When can they meet?’ They subsequently met.

Answering parent’s questions - Families’ questions were addressed by the “advocate”, according to members Shane, a retired SE director and step-father of a child with ASD, reported that during his initial contact with Mary, the parent of a child with ASD, he was “… responding concerns, giving Mary instructions.” Mary also stated that Shane responded to her inquiries by saying, “I felt like he could give me an unbiased, you know, opinion.” Participants were able to build relationships with families by talking to them and start a process of advocacy.
Having compassion for the Family - The advocates, according to the people involved, were themselves families of disabled children. People felt that “advocates” could relate to family because they had personal experience raising disabled children.

Sharing own experience - Relating personal experience. Respondents said that “advocates” used personal stories about their own disabilities to establish a rapport of confidence with family. Eileen, Susie’s “advocate”, “had more of an intimate understanding of the districts and all things as well as personal experiences, “According to Susie, a parent of a deaf child. "I've been here for 16 years... she has similar circumstances and problems, and they kind of related through them over a year ago,” said “Eileen, the parent of a kid” with apraxia.

Being supportive - Relating personal experience. Respondents said that “advocates” used intimate details about their own disabilities to establish a rapport of confidence with family. Eileen, Susie’s “advocate”, “had more of an intimate understanding of the districts and all things as well as personal experiences," according to Susie, a parent of a deaf child. "I've been here for 16 years... she has similar circumstances and problems, and they kind of related through them over an entire year ago,” said Eileen, the parent of a kid with apraxia.
Empowering the family - Participants said that “advocates” increased parent-school interaction, encouraged the family to keep records of school communication, and encouraged the family to ask queries of the school to enable families to be active IEP teammates.

Encouraging the family to ask questions - Advocates allegedly urged parents to question the school, particularly at IEP sessions, according to attendees. “The advocate”, “Kristine”, who was also the mom of a child with Down syndrome, met with the family before the IEP conference and urged them to prepare questions for the IEP meeting. They had to sort to prioritize when they attended Pam’s daughter’s IEP meeting in April, according to “Kristine”, who said, “So, what do they want to accomplish here?” Pam, a mother of two special needs kids, recalled that before the IEP meeting, she would consult Kristine on the right issues to bring up. What do you think about that?” Pam questioned Kristine. Can I have the please? Could I have that please?

Increasing the parent’s involvement in school communications - “Advocates” reportedly made an effort to improve parent-school interaction, according to respondents. Irma, a mom of an ASD child, noted that Matie, who serves as her “advocate” has improved her interaction with the school. Irma said her kid had a hard time making the shift to and from school. In addition to suggesting that Irma ask for transport, Matie also advised Irma to a social invitation narrative to help her daughter adjust to going from home to school. Irma asserted that implementing these tactics, "When I arrived [at the school], I already knew how to talk to them." Matie also reported. The institution agreed to offer transport and a social narrative for Irma’s child after exchanging multiple emails.

Encouraging the family to document - Counsel assisted family in submitting complaints to the school in order to educate and empower family. In order to document interactions with the school, Janet (the advocate) worked along with “Allison, the mother of a child” with ASD. Allison was appreciative of Janet’s assistance in instructing her on how to mail letters to the school. The most effective tactics, according to Allison, "were letter writing, ensuring people knew I was making demands, and making sure people understood," she said.

Getting ready for IEP meetings - Participants addressed issues related to the IEP and attended IEP meetings as two approaches to prepare family for meetings with the IEP.

Addressing IEP-related concerns - Sarah stated that she met with Anita (the advocate) to review the IEP before IEP meetings. Sarah, for instance, stated that she wanted her son to take particular subjects in order for him to earn a conventional education credential. Sarah particularly wished her kid to take an environmental subject (instead of a chemistry class that primarily relied on math) because he had a math-related impairment. The college declined. Sarah wrote. He has some difficulties with learning, so they [the school] only had to conduct the necessary tests and then make the legally permissible alterations, which is what they did, according to Anita, who addressed Sarah’s worries.

IEP meetings attendance - Participants said that by showing up at IEP meetings, “advocates” encouraged family. Mary expressed her appreciation for Shane’s presence at the IEP meeting, saying, "It’s just mostly having someone there because it’s kind of stressful so getting somebody who actually opens up helps a whole lot." Shane recounted addressing queries at the IEP discussion with Mary.

Educating the family - Participants said that through clarifying services, alerting parents of their rights, and disseminating details of trainings, “advocates” informed parents.

Explaining services - Participants stated that parents were informed about services via “advocates”. Allison was not aware that her daughter had a BIP at the time Janet (the advocate) described to her what a BIP was for. Janet noticed the BIP after looking over Allison’s IEP and told Allison what it was made of and what it was for. She also assisted Allison as she collaborated with the school to raise the BIP's standard. The outcome, according to Janet, is that I was able to persuade Allison to recognize the importance of a very specific behaviours plan for her child, and that a behaviour plan that is specific also entails consistency. Allison observed the same.

Parent rights -Respondents stated that parents were informed of their rights by activits. "I assisted her say like 'Hey, that's not true, you do have to give permission, you do have to sign stuff," Eileen (an advocate) said of helping Susie, a child who was uninformed of her duties. Advocates claimed that they were able to empower parents by explaining to them their duties in the SE process and by educating them on important concepts. Similar to Susie, "She [Ellen] gave me a few things like that too," she noted. She made me many offers of articles and other items.

Distributing details on parent trainings - Participants said that “advocates” discussed training details with them. Maharba (parent) revealed that her “advocate”, Linda, who worked as well at the PTI, informed her about classes there. The training Linda conducted to explain the IEP meeting, according to Maharba, was the most helpful item for her. Regarding numerous sessions, Linda reportedly said to Maharba: "They have the meeting that, you know, that's stuff that they ask families to go to. Live workshops are offered. On our YouTube channel, they provide video meetings. Participants enabled families to learn more about their liberties by pointing them in the direction of resources and guidance.

Providing ongoing support - The “advocate” reportedly assisted the family continuously, according to the members. For instance, “Linda” and “Maharba” stated that Linda had been ‘Maharba’s” “advocate” for the previous ten years (from preschool to middle school). “Maharba” said, "Linda additionally stated that she was going to stay an “advocate” for Maharba's son." Linda was asked if she would be continuing to be her “advocate”. But Linda also underlined the value of
“Maharba” developing her own advocacy skills: “I am helping her to develop her own advocacy skills because that is extremely crucial. You know, there are a lot of disadvantages for many Latino families. Linda also mentioned that institutional barriers make it challenging for Latino families to mobilize. Maharba’s need to learn how to speak up for self: “I am training her to learn how to speak up for herself because it is really essential. You know, there are a lot of disadvantages for many Latino families. Linda also mentioned that institutional barriers make it challenging for Latino families to organize.

4.2. The School’s Response to Advocacy

Favourable response - The majority of interviewees stated that the “advocate” received a favourable response from the institution. An “advocate” named Linda, for instance, stated that “The school was always receptive...” to her presence. “The school reacted very well because she [Linda]—it was not her first IEP meeting that she visited there,” said Maharba (parent). The school was already familiar with her art. Due to the school's familiarity with the advocacy, according to other duos (such as Janet and Allison), the school was more accommodating.

Confrontational - Some participants reported that schools were unfriendly (hostile in the sense of disrespectful, unhappy). Pam and “advocate” Kristine attended an IEP meeting that, in Kristine’s opinion, was rather heated. Right away, they were pretty aggressive, and I wish I could have handled it better. Pam said she didn’t get along with the education team. She added that during earlier IEP meetings, Kristine had encountered antagonistic conduct from the SP director. Pam remarked, “I feel like Matthew [the district representative] was pretty nasty with her [Kristine] for some reason. Two additional pairs complained that the education was hostile. Sarah, the parent, had a tough relationship with the education, according to the other couple, Anita and Sarah. Due to Megan, the parent, being a passionate ally and understanding of her rights, one of the dyads, Megan and Jane, alleged that the education was hostile. However, the pair went on to say that the institution only turned hostile when the parent or “advocate” requested its assistance.

Surprised - Some participants claimed that schools were hostile (i.e., disrespectful, dissatisfied). The IEP meeting Pam and “advocate” “Kristine” attended was quite combative, according to Kristine. They were quite hostile right away, and I wish I could have handled it differently. Pam claimed that she didn’t get along with the school squad. She also mentioned that “Kristine” had experienced hostile behaviour from the SP director during previous IEP discussions. Pam remarked, “I feel like Matthew [the district representative] was pretty nasty with her [Kristine] for some reason. Two additional pairs complained that the education was hostile. The other couple, “Anita and Sarah”, revealed that “Sarah”, the parent, had a tense relationship with the education. One of the dyads, Megan and Jane, said that the school was combative because “Megan”, the parent, was an aggressive “advocate” and fluent of her rights. However, the pair also asserted that the institution only turned hostile when the parent or “advocate” requested assistance from it. They were a little shocked when they first met. They may not have truly known how to handle Janet. They (past advocates) were a touch passive, Janet said in response. The school staff members were taken aback.

4.3. The Effects of Advocacy and Effective Techniques

Outcome of advocacy - Participants claimed that lobbying resulted in more resources, better school environments, better student outcomes, and better parent relationships.

Expanded appropriate services - Participants claimed that the “advocate” made it feasible for children with disabilities to get the proper help. According to Megan, Jane (the advocate) helped her receive an AAC device from the school: “Jane actually assistance us get the speech gadget”. The school personnel will now be able to contact with her via technology. They got what they wanted. Jane claimed that she supported Megan in requesting the AAC device from the school, despite the difficulty of doing so: “She [Megan] did not mean to just quietly go away. She pushed on, moving forward with determination. She is among those people who never quits up.

Enhanced school performance - Several attendees asserted that “advocacy” led to modified educational outcomes, including relevant evaluations and diplomas, labels for disabilities, and aspirations. Anita said of her efforts on Sarah’s behalf, “I think the part where they got the extra examinations that got him the course [i.e., ecology course] that he believed would be the most beneficial for him to graduate—that was probably the best thing I did for them.” Sarah added that Anita supported her in her fight for a traditional graduation in addition to helping her win the class: “They worked hard with him to get my child to eventually walk across the platform and not go for his “GED” or for an electronic diploma. They had great difficulty.

Increased academic progress - Participants said that the child made educational progress as a result of advocating, “I feel the greatest thing is and... I pretty much cry each time I speak to them... it's when they informed me that their children is doing more successful,” Matie said of how her activism assisted Irma’s daughter in improving. Irma stated, “Now that she [my daughter] knows how to write her name and brings a few materials that the educators gave her... and yes, there are a few words [she is reading] and she is doing it [reading],” in a comparable way.

Improved parent experience - Parents’ advocacy, according to participants, had a positive effect. These results included improved family-school ties, improved parental-school communication, increased parental empowerment,
improved family standard of living, and improved SP expertise, to name a few. Yes, Janet is very particular, but I have a big picture, and this is the result is great for the high lifestyle high standard of living for both of my children, Allison remarked. They both live better lives as a result of lobbying, in my opinion. According to Janet, "I think that [the advocacy] lowered her stress".

5. Conclusion

In that study, we investigated how advocates' and families' experiences with the SP advocacy method. They discovered three key things. First, the identical advocacy procedure was described by both supporters and family. Second, the research provided insight into how the institution handled advocacy. Third, the outcomes of advocacy appeared to be favourable. Previous studies have shown that child advocacy results in better outcomes. The study had some restrictions. First of all, every "advocate" had successfully finished the VAS, a program for advocacy. Other programs' "advocates" might use an alternative advocacy strategy. Therefore, transferability might only apply to VAS proponents. Second, no data from observations were gathered to support the advocates' and family' allegations. Such information would be beneficial for both comprehending the advocacy process and disseminating the results to a larger advocate organization.

Finally, it is critical to carry out study into the detrimental effects of advocacy. Our study's respondents might have agreed to take part because they had generally good experiences with advocating. Understanding how "advocates" assist the families with disabled children is vital. By exploring the advocacy process from the viewpoints of families who have difficulties and their "advocates", the research adds to the body of knowledge on the subject. This study also implies that advocating for SP may help children and families have good results. It is necessary to conduct more thorough study to determine how advocacy affects student accomplishment.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Declaration of interest

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