How to Foster and Support Self-Determination in All Students

Produced by the Technical Assistance Partnership (TAP) for Transition at Cornell University.

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Disclaimer

The resources shown are designed to provide helpful information. Resources are provided for instructional use purposes only and do not constitute NYSED endorsement of any vendor, author, or other sources. To the best of our knowledge, the resources provided are true and complete.
Meet and Greet

Introduce yourself (name, school/district, role).

Think about what it means to be self-determined.

Share your answer with the group.
New York State Education Department Office of Special Education

Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities

**Self-Advocacy**
Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.

**Family Partnership**
Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.

**Specially-Designed Instruction**
Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially-designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

**Research-Based Instruction**
Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.

**Multi-tiered Support**
Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.

**Inclusive Activities**
Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.

**Transition Support**
Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.
Meeting Norms

• Take care of your needs (water, food, restroom, etc.).
• Speak your truth—use “I” statements.
• Ask what you need to understand and contribute.
• Listen with respect.
• Push your growing edge.
• Participate and struggle together.
• Expect a lack of closure.
• Respect each others’ needs and learning styles.
Learning Objectives

Participants will:

1. Recognize and identify definitions of self-determination and the elements that comprise self-determination.

2. Access and utilize materials and resources to aid in the promotion of self-determination throughout the transition planning process.

3. Identify strategies to support self-determination skill development for students across all ages and settings.

4. Be able to apply and implement these concepts into practice to foster self-determination in all students.
Materials

• Elements of Self-Determination
• National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) Research to Practice Brief—Self-Determination: Supporting Successful Transition
• Self-Determination Assessment Resource List
• PACER Center Transition Planning Tips for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Youth with Disabilities
• Family Cultural Asset Profile
• Self-Monitoring: Equipping Students to Manage Their Own Behavior in the Classroom
• The Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) Teacher’s Guide
• Strategies to Incorporate Self-Determination Concepts into Elementary Curriculum
• Ideas for Incorporating Self-Determination into the Curriculum
Do Now Activity

Please take a moment to read the research findings regarding the impact of self-determination shown in the boxes.

Choose the statistic(s) that “speaks” the most to you.

#1
More than twice as likely as peers to be employed one year after graduation.
(Wehmeyer, 2002)

#2
More likely to be making more money per hour and employed in a job with benefits.
(Wehmeyer and Palmer, 2003)

#3
More likely to be living independently.
(Wehmeyer and Palmer, 2003)

#4
More likely to perform required tasks and meet their own goals in school.
(Benz, Lindstrom and Yovanoff, 2000)

#5
More likely to be involved with educational planning and decision making.
(Wehmeyer and Schwartz, 1997)

#6
More likely to stay in school because they are engaged in planning their education so it is meaningful.
(Covington-Smith, 2008)
What Is Self-Determination? Why Is It Important?
What Is Self-Determination?

• Skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in behavior that is:
  o Goal-directed
  o Self-regulated
  o Autonomous

• The ability to understand one’s strengths and weaknesses

• Belief in oneself as capable and effective

(Field et al., 1998)
Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determined Behavior: 3 Basic Needs

- Autonomy
- Competence
- Relatedness
Self-Determination
Student-Friendly Definition

"Being self-determined means acting or causing things to happen as you set and work toward goals in your life."

(SDLM Teachers Guide, p. 14)
Questions We Need to Help Students Answer

Who am I?  Where am I going?  How will I get there?
Components of Self-Determined Action

- Make choices
- Express preferences
- Solve problems
- Set and attain goals
- Self-advocate
- Acquire self-awareness and self-knowledge

(Shogren et al., 2015a)
## Elements of Self-Determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Abilities</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choice Making</strong>&lt;br&gt;The skill of selecting a path forward between two known options.</td>
<td><strong>Decision Making</strong>&lt;br&gt;The skill of selecting a path forward based on various solutions that have each been thoughtfully considered.</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong>&lt;br&gt;The skill of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal Setting and Attainment</strong>&lt;br&gt;The ability to develop a goal, plan for implementation, and measure success.</td>
<td><strong>Self-Regulation</strong>&lt;br&gt;The ability to monitor and control one's own behaviors, actions, and skills in various situations.</td>
<td><strong>Self-Advocacy</strong>&lt;br&gt;The skills necessary to speak up and/or defend a cause or a person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Locus of Control</strong>&lt;br&gt;The belief that one has control over outcomes that are important to one’s own life.</td>
<td><strong>Self-Efficacy</strong>&lt;br&gt;Belief in one’s own ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish specific tasks.</td>
<td><strong>Self-Awareness</strong>&lt;br&gt;Basic understanding of one's own strengths, needs, and abilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from *I’m Determined PDF*
## Predictors of Post-School Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors/Outcomes</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Independent Living</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Awareness</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Technical Education (was Vocational Education)</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Evidence-based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Experiences</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma Status</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-Setting</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion In General Education</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interagency Collaboration</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Courses</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Employment/Work Experience</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Expectations</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Involvement</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program of Study</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Empowerment (new)</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Care/Independent Living</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Research-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Realization (new)</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Promising</td>
<td>Promising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NTACT Predictors by Outcome Area 2021*
Research to Practice Brief
Self-Determination: Supporting Successful Transition

Let’s take a closer look.

Please take a few minutes to read through the article.
• Make note of key information; what is new learning for you? (+)
• Reflect: What resonates the most with you? (*)

Please be prepared to share out 1-2 takeaways you identify from the article.

Self-Determination: Supporting Successful Transition (Bremer et al., 2003)
Promoting Self-Determination
Creating Buy-in for Families and Professionals

• Are any of these activities occurring already?
• Which ones could be tried, expanded, or improved upon?
• What are other examples?

Please be prepared to share out 1–2 things that you could do to foster self-determination skill development for your child, students, or district.

Self-Determination: Supporting Successful Transition (Bremer et al., 2003)
Self-Determination Across the Lifespan
It’s Never Too Early to Start

Early Childhood
- Toddlers and young children need to feel control over their environment by having access to choose toys and clothes, make decisions, and problem-solve.

Elementary School
- Students need to know about their disability, what it means, and how it affects learning and behavior. They need to embrace their strengths.

Middle and High School
- Students need to be competent and confident in their decisions, take the lead in meetings for and about them, and learn goal setting and achievement.

Video: Elementary Students: What Does Self-Determination Mean to You?

Adapted from I’m Determined Module Three: Parents Developing Self-Determination in their Youth
Development of Self-Determined Behavior

• Elements of self-determination are acquired through a developmental progression.
• The path to acquisition of these skills begins at a very early age.
• Skills build upon each other; efforts to teach certain skills rely on acquiring prerequisite skills.

(Doll, Sands, Wehmeyer, & Palmer, 1996)
Skill Development Is a Progression (1 of 3)

Age: 10–12 years
• Describe and know their disability
• Identify what their needs/fears are in school and the community
• Explain who helps them in school and the community
• Know what a Committee on Special Education (CSE) meeting is and participate in their meeting

Age: 12–14 years
• Evaluate how their disability impacts their daily life
• Describe what accommodations they use
• Explain how their accommodations help them
• Provide information at their CSE meeting regarding how they learn best, their likes, dislikes, dreams

Adapted from: I’m Determined Transition Guide: Self-Determination
Age: 14–15 years
• Participate in age-appropriate transition assessments and understand how the results relate to their transition plan
• Become an active member of their CSE team
• Identify and begin coordination of supports/create a circle of support
• Appropriately express wants and needs

Age: 15–16 years
• Continue involvement in assessment process—state how results relate to their postsecondary goals
• Describe issues related to self-disclosure (when, what, how)
• Continue participating in their CSE meetings—include in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) issues related to Assistive Technology, Health Care, and Transportation
• Define self-success

Adapted from: I’m Determined Transition Guide: Self-Determination
Skill Development Is a Progression (3 of 3)

Age: 16–17 years
- Realize and understand barriers and solutions to becoming self-determined
- Independently discuss with high school staff needed accommodations and supports
- Understand adult rights and responsibilities
- Continue participating in CSE meetings, provide direct input into the development of IEP goals

Age: 18–21 years
- Direct personal assistance services (e.g., assistance with personal care, medical needs, etc.)
- Understand and use cause-and-effect strategies
- Further develop self-advocacy skills as they relate to postsecondary goals
- Assume adult rights and responsibilities

Adapted from: I’m Determined Transition Guide: Self-Determination
New York State Education Department (NYSED) Career Plans

A Resource for Supporting Self-Determination Skills K–12

• Career Plans are for all students across all grade levels. A Career Plan documents a history of achievement that students build from elementary school to high school.

• Kindergarten to Commencement Level plans are available on the NYSED website; students in grades 6–12 can create individual plans using NYS Department of Labor’s CareerZone website.

• Connect learning across subject areas, align with Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Learning Standards.

• Student participation in the completion of career plans promotes the development of self-determination skills including self-awareness, choice-making, decision-making, and goal-setting and attainment.
Pause, Reflect, and Share 1

What is one way you will help foster self-determination skill development across all ages?

How can schools and families work together to support this?
Assessing Self-Determination
Self-Determination Assessments

Assessments provide:

• An objective measure of self-determination skills.
• A baseline for determining individual strengths, needs, preferences, and limitations.
• A tool for progress monitoring.
Assessment Examples

Many self-determination assessments are free to use and come in a variety of formats. **Some no-cost examples include:**

- American Institutes for Research (AIR) Self-Determination Assessment
- The Arc’s Self-Determination Scale
- Self-Determination Inventory System
- Personal Preference Indicators
AIR Self-Determination Assessment

- The AIR Assessments measure two broad self-determination components.
- Capacity refers to the student’s knowledge, abilities, and perceptions that enable them to be self-determined.
- Opportunity refers to the student’s opportunities to use their knowledge and abilities.
- Student, parent, and educator versions available.
The Arc’s Self-Determination Scale

• The Arc provides a total self-determination score and 4 sub-domain scores: autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization.

• Each section is completed and scored differently.

• Scoring requires the use of a manual.

• Student version only.

**Section One**

**Autonomy**

1A. Independence: Routine personal care and family oriented functions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
<th>Option 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I make my own meals or snacks.</td>
<td>☐ I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I care for my own clothes.</td>
<td>☐ I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I do chores in my home.</td>
<td>☐ I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I keep my own personal items together.</td>
<td>☐ I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I do simple first aid or medical care for myself.</td>
<td>☐ I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I keep good personal care and grooming.</td>
<td>☐ I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>☐ I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions: Check the answer on each question that BEST tells how you act in that situation. There are no right or wrong answers. Check only one answer for each question. (If you have a disability that limits you from actually performing the activity, but you have control over the activity by using a personal care attendant, answer like you performed the activity.)

1A. Subtotal

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**ARC Self-Determination Scale**
Self-Determination Inventory System (SDIS)

The SDIS Data Dashboard allows users to create user accounts, assign surveys to participants, take surveys, and view survey results.

• The assessment offers audio that reads the questions aloud and in-text definitions of words.
• Responses are completed online; it is scored, and a report is generated automatically.
• Student, parent/teacher, and adult versions are available.
Personal Preference Indicators

- A free guide to assist in planning with and for a person with a developmental disability.
- In an interview format.
- Designed for student’s family members, friends, or professionals who know the student well, to provide information.
- Available in English and Spanish.
- Assesses likes, dislikes, social indicators, choices, health, body clock (wake and sleep patterns), and future.

### FAVORITES
**Individual Indicators**

**What are the person’s favorites?** Do you know why? How can you tell? Any other things?

- foods
- games
- music/sounds
- smells
- friends
- topics/objects
- activities/place to go
- being alone/with others
- TV show
- animals
- color
- clothes

**Who are the person’s favorite people?** Do you know why? How can you tell?

**What are the person’s favorite things about himself or herself?**
Pause, Reflect, and Share 2

How can we use self-determination assessments to guide skill development?

How can schools and families work together to support this?
Supporting Students in Developing Self-Determination Skills
Putting Theory Into Practice

Skills
Abilities
Beliefs

Autonomy
Competence
Relatedness

Self-Determination

Exploring self-determination: Using theory to guide practice
Self-Determination in All Settings

Predictor Implementation Self-Assessment (PISA)

Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy Essential Program Characteristics:

• Utilize a student-driven IEP process.

• Collaborate with general education teachers to embed choices into the general curriculum and daily lessons.

• Teach students to self-monitor self-determination skills and provide opportunities for students to practice.

Adapted from Predictor Implementation Self-Assessment
More PISA Program Characteristics

• Conduct age-appropriate transition assessments.
• Engage in honest and respectful discussions with students about their assessment responses.
• Provide direct instruction in self-determination using a structured curriculum or evidence-based instructional strategy.
• Support students to make choices for themselves through the day, discuss options and the potential consequences of their choices, and foster leadership skills.

Adapted from Predictor Implementation Self-Assessment
Culturally Responsive Self-Determination Approaches

• Parents and students can share family and student goals for the future and explore the role that cultural values play in transition planning.

• Discuss self-advocacy skills that may be helpful to the student within the context of their culture.

• Identify adults who can serve as role models and other natural supports within the context of their culture that can help increase self-determination skills.

• Encourage the student to explore their cultural identity as part of the transition planning process.

(Cote et al., 2012)
Exploring Cultural Assets

Family Cultural Asset Profile

• Assessment based on Yosso’s cultural wealth model (Yosso, 2005)

• Cultural assets
  o Aspirational assets
  o Linguistic assets
  o Familial and social assets
  o Navigational assets
  o Resistance assets

• Family, student, and educator versions

(Achola, 2021)
## Family Cultural Asset Profile—Example Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Asset Domain</th>
<th>Key Resources/Assets Identified (e.g., aunt with a business, public speaking skills, interest in self-employment)</th>
<th>Matching Transition Domain (Employment, Education &amp; Training, Adult living, other)</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Aspirational</td>
<td>• Student would like to start a photography business</td>
<td>• Employment • Education</td>
<td>• Student to complete online tutorials on photography • Student and family to apply for small business grant to buy photography equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Linguistic</td>
<td>• Student speaks sign language, English &amp; Khmer • Great at public speaking</td>
<td>• Employment • Education</td>
<td>• Counselor to assist student explore careers in special education, politics, journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Familial &amp; Social</td>
<td>• Has a cousin who goes to Cerritos college • Grandparents can provide accommodation • Family friend who is a school counselor</td>
<td>• Education • Adult Living</td>
<td>• Cousin will assist with campus visit and applications • Grandparents to provide housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Navigational</td>
<td>• Guardian receives care through the Affordable Care Act (ACA)</td>
<td>• Adult Living</td>
<td>• Teacher and guardian to teach student about healthcare transition and access to services provided under ACA • Area of need to be addressed in the ITP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Resistance</td>
<td>• Not identified</td>
<td>• N/A</td>
<td>• Area of need to be addressed in the transition plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Areas of need

- Self-advocacy
- Racial socialization
- Career development
- Participation in faith communities
- Networking

- Education • Adult living • Employment

- Student will enroll in ethnic studies course • Teacher & family to assist student to become a Cambodian Advocacy Intern • Teacher to make curricula accessible to mosque that run homework programs
Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) Recording
Video 1: CRE Consideration with Transition
Approaches for Developing Student Self-Determination

• Directly teaching skills or enhancing knowledge
• Embedding instruction into the general curriculum
• Using a student-driven IEP and transition planning process

Adapted from NSTTAC: Teaching Self-Determination Skills to Students with Disabilities
Self-Determination and Instructional Design
Consider Cultural Views When Initiating Self-Determination Instruction

• When using self-determination programs or curricula, pay attention to the underlying values being emphasized and consider how they may align or contradict the student’s cultural values.

• Each self-determination skill should be taught with a component on how to use it appropriately in different settings.

• When possible, include the student’s family in the instruction to provide culturally relevant feedback.

Leake & Black, 2005
Teaching Self-Determination Skills Across Settings

Direct instruction

Directly teaching skills or enhancing knowledge, for example:

• Self-management (self-monitoring)
• Choice-making
• Problem-solving
• Self-awareness

How do we teach these component skills explicitly?

Adapted from NSTTAC: Teaching Self-Determination Skills to Students with Disabilities
Example: Self-Monitoring

Equipping Students to Manage Their Own Behavior in the Classroom

• Read the brief “Self-Monitoring: Equipping Students to Manage Their Own Behavior in the Classroom,” and review the examples provided.
• Reflect on a skill you are working on with one of your students/children.
• Think: How could the student monitor their own progress?

(Bell et al., 2013)
Behavior Recording

Self-Determination
Resources for Teaching Self-Determination

- I’m Determined
- Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction
- Me! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy
- Transition Bell Ringers
- Whose Future Is It Anyway?
- ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Curriculum
- Early Steps to Self-Determination
I’m Determined

• Provides quick links to resources for educators, parents, and youth
• All documents/resources are available for download at no cost
• **Approved Partnership Resource**: Toolbox for Self-Determination
The SDLMI is a teaching model implemented by teachers to enable their students to self-direct and self-regulate their actions in pursuit of goals. It is used by teachers to enable students to:

- Set goals
- Make choices and decisions
- Develop plans to reach goals
- Track progress toward goals

*It is also an excellent user-friendly tool for parents and families.*
SDIMI (continued)

Use the model to support students with or without disabilities to:

- Learn and use skills that enable them to problem-solve, leading to goal-setting and attainment.
- Identify meaningful learning goals across multiple curricular domains.
- Make progress toward goals across multiple curricular domains.
- Achieve more positive school and post-school outcomes.
- Become more self-determined.

Teacher’s Guide provides descriptions, examples, and reproducible worksheets.
Published, Research-Based Curricula
Available for free download at the University of Oklahoma (OU)
Zarrow Institute

• **ME! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy**
  • Lessons for students with mild to moderate disabilities
  • Teaches students to understand their disability and abilities, rights and responsibilities, and self-advocacy skills
  • Students develop a portfolio to help them transition from high school to postsecondary settings

• **Transition Bell Ringers**
  • Time to Teach: 5–10 minutes at the beginning of class
  • Skills: Disability awareness, goal-setting, knowledge to lead an IEP meeting
  • Ready-made PowerPoints: 50 Elementary, 50 Secondary Transition, 50 Secondary Financial Literacy
Self-Determination Curricula
Available for free download at the OU Zarrow Institute

• **Whose Future is it Anyway?**
  • Helps prepare students for their IEP meetings and gain self-determination skills.
  • Practical, hands-on lessons that are easy to implement.
  • Includes Coach’s Guide.

• **Choicemaker Self-Determination Curriculum**
  • Consists of: Choosing Goals, Expressing Goals (Self-Directed IEP), and Taking Action. Each addresses teaching objectives in three transition areas: Education, Employment, and Personal.
  • Choosing Goals and Taking Action modules are designed for use by all students. The Self-Directed IEP is the only module designed for use only by students receiving special education services.
Elementary Curriculum

Early Steps to Self-Determination

• Based on the model of self-determination developed by Field and Hoffman

• Designed to be taught in grades K–5

• Includes 6–8 developmentally appropriate instructional activities for each of the following content areas for each grade level: Know Yourself and Your Context; Value Yourself; Plan; and Act and Experience Outcomes and Learn
Pause, Reflect, and Share 3

How can we integrate these resources into our work with students?

How can schools and families work together to support this?
Self-Determination for ALL Students
Embedding Instruction into the General Curriculum

How do we teach self-determination in:

• Science and math classes
• Language arts and social studies classes
• Physical education, art, and music classes
• Elective classes
• Vocational classes and programs
• Special education classes and programs
• Extracurricular activities

(Cabeza et al., 2013)
Teaching Self-Determination Skills
Embedding Instruction into the General Curriculum

Integrate Skills
• Address real-life topics when designing lessons.
• Link academic skills with real-life skills.

Seize Teachable Moments
• Model self-determination skills whenever possible.
• Identify opportunities for students to practice self-determination skills.

Use specially designed materials and lessons
• Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
## Example Strategies for Educators and Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Determination Component</th>
<th>Example Strategy for Educators/Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Choice-Making                | • Provide 2-3 learning activity options and allow students to make a choice based on their preferences.  
                                 • Allow students to choose how they will demonstrate mastery of a specific curriculum topic. |
| Decision-Making              | • Teach students how one decision can have multiple impacts.  
                                 • Teach “group-think” decision activities based on role-plays, stories, and videos. |
| Problem-Solving              | • Help students develop the ability to find an appropriate solution when faced with a challenge.  
                                 • Have students reflect on the way they solved a challenging situation and make adjustments for future situations. |
| Goal-Setting and Attainment  | • Work with students to develop plans that include steps to reach a goal and any necessary resources.  
                                 • Help students set manageable and realistic goals that can be met in a short time period. |

(Adapted from Cabeza et al., 2013)
### Example Strategies (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Determination Component</th>
<th>Example Strategy for Educators and Families</th>
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| Self-Advocacy and Leadership | • Design roleplay situations where students practice advocating for themselves in a safe environment.  
• Encourage students to advocate for their own preferences, desires, or opinions when appropriate. |
| Self-Management and Self-Regulation | • Have students create a journal of their daily academic, behavioral, and social goals.  
• Support students in reflecting on their learning preferences, academic strengths and areas for growth, and academic goals. |
| Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge | • Design a class activity where students roleplay as if they were someone else to accept various perspectives, prejudices, and stereotypes often held by others.  
• Talk individually to brainstorm ways to maximize their strengths and minimize their limitations in different settings. |

(Adapted from Cabeza et al., 2013)
How Can We Build Skills Across Settings?

Leveraging Environments: Home, School, and Community/Work

**Autonomy**
- Build in choices
- Problem-solving opportunities
- Delegate responsibility
- Allowing failure as a learning experience

**Competence**
- Specific positive feedback
- Opportunities to respond
- Opportunities to practice
- Scaffold

**Relatedness**
- Inclusive practices
- Inclusive opportunities
- Disability awareness for all
- Common goals

(McNaught, 2022)
Self-Determination and Student Involvement in the IEP Process
What Is Student Involvement in the IEP Process?

- Occurs within the context of the overall IEP process
- Specific roles vary and are individualized based on age, needs, abilities
- Approach can be utilized from K to 12th grade
- Requires investment in preparing students and parents
Impact of Student Involvement in the IEP Process

Students who understand and are involved in their IEPs are more likely to:

• Work toward accomplishing their goals.
• Advocate for themselves in the classroom.
• Be invested in learning and educational progress.
• Understand the role that related services and supports play in their success.
Student Involvement in the IEP Process Along a Continuum

- IEP takes place without student present
- Student present with minimal participation and/or preparation
- Student present with some participation
- Student present and actively participates by taking responsibility for at least one piece of the process
- Student present and takes responsibility for most of the process, including but not limited to stating the purpose, introducing participants, presenting past performance and future goals

Student-Directed IEP Continuum, adapted from Thoma & Wehman, 2010.
Ways to Involve Students in Meetings

• Prepare and send invitations.
• Conduct introductions.
• Make a presentation.
• Communicate strengths, weaknesses, needs, and interests.
• Request accommodations.
• Define future goals and dreams.
• Write sections of the IEP.
• Facilitate all or part of the meeting.
Reflections from: Students, Parents, and Educators

Video:
I'm Determined: Self-Determination—The Importance of Student Involvement in IEPs
Self-Determination After High School
Crossing the Bridge to Adulthood

What do we know?

What do we need to know?

How do we get there?

Adult Life
Self-Determination and Navigating Adult Services

• In order to navigate adult services, self-determination skills are key.

• Students and their families will need to advocate with adult service providers and share their needs.

• Students will need to understand their disability and their own preferences, strengths, and needs.
Impact of Self-Determination Skills

Students with greater self-determination skills have:

• Greater academic achievement in high school.
• Higher rates of enrollment in and completion of postsecondary educational experiences.
• Higher rates of employment.

(Shogren et al., 2015b; Martin et al., 2006)
Questions and Answers
Wrap-Up Activity
Leaving in Good Shape

- What do you still have questions about?
- What three things could you use from today moving forward?
- What’s squared away?
  What do you really understand?
Resources (1 of 2)

AIR Self-Determination Assessments

Arc Self-Determination Scale

Culturally Responsive Transition Planning

Early Steps to Self-Determination Curriculum

I’m Determined (Videos, Toolbox for Self-Determination, Module 3—Parents Developing Self-Determination in Their Youth, Transition Guide: Self-Determination

NSTTAC: Teaching Self-Determination Skills to Students with Disabilities

NYS Career Plans
Resources (2 of 2)

PACER Center

Personal Preference Indicators

Predictor Implementation School/District Self Assessment

Self-Determination Inventory System

Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI)

Self-Determination Research-Based Curricula available from Zarrow Institute

Transition Planning Tips for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Youth with Disabilities

Universal Design for Learning
References (1 of 6)


References (2 of 6)


References (3 of 6)


References (4 of 6)


References (5 of 6)


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