



# SELF- DETERMINATION & SELF-ADVOCACY

HOW TO GET YOUR CHILD  
INVOLVED IN THEIR IEP OR  
SECTION 504 PLAN



**OLENTANGY SCHOOLS**<sup>SM</sup>  
*Flourish Here.*

# OLENTANGY SCHOOLS PARENT MENTORS

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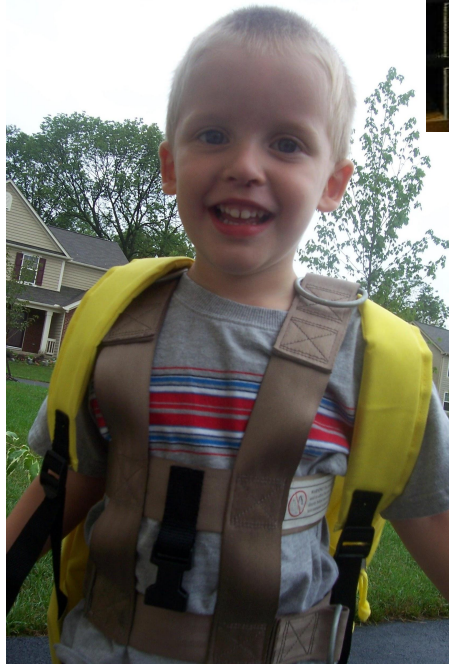
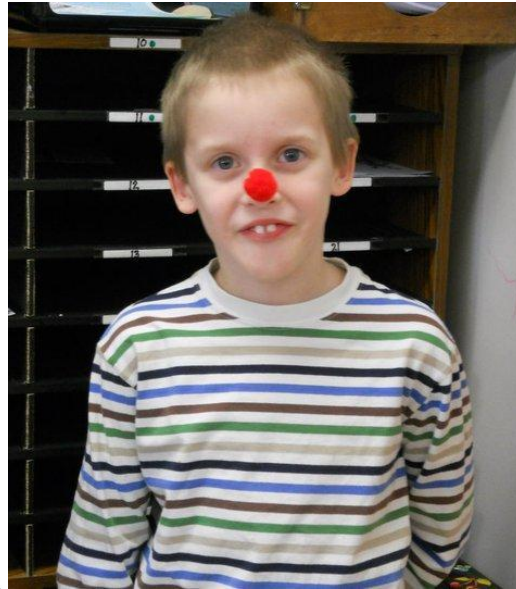
# WHAT IS A PARENT MENTOR?

- An Olentangy parent of a child with special needs.
- Has **experience navigating** the special education system.
- Helps parents **understand and obtain services** for students.
- Helps the schools understand **family perspective** and foster **relationships**.

The ***purpose*** of the Parent Mentor Program is to help parents of children with disabilities effectively navigate the educational system in **partnership** with the school district personnel, with the expectation that **students with disabilities** be ensured an **appropriate and meaningful education**.



# MY JOURNEY



# RESOURCES



<https://www.imdetermined.org/>



<https://www.pacer.org/transition/>



<https://www.understood.org/en>



# WHAT IS SELF-DETERMINATION?

Self determination is **believing you can control your own destiny**. Self-determination is a combination of attitudes and abilities that lead people to set goals for themselves, and to take the initiative to reach these goals. It is about **being in charge**, but is not necessarily the same thing as self-sufficiency or independence. It means **making your own choices, learning to effectively solve problems, and taking control and responsibility for one's life**. Practicing self-determination also means one experiences the consequences of making choices.

<b>CHOICE MAKING</b> The skill of selecting a path forward between two known options <b>Cm</b>	<b>DECISION MAKING</b> The skill of selecting a path forward based on various solutions that have each been thoughtfully considered <b>Dm</b>	<b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b> The skill of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues <b>Ps</b>
<b>GOAL SETTING &amp; ATTAINMENT</b> The ability to develop a goal, plan for implementation, and measure success <b>Gs</b>	<b>SELF-REGULATION</b> The ability to monitor and control one's own behaviors, actions, and skills in various situations <b>Re</b>	<b>SELF-ADVOCACY</b> The skills necessary to speak up and/or defend a cause or a person <b>Ad</b>
<b>INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL</b> The belief that one has control over outcomes that are important to his or her own life <b>Lc</b>	<b>SELF-EFFICACY</b> Belief in one's own ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish specific tasks <b>Ef</b>	<b>SELF-AWARENESS</b> Basic understanding of one's own strengths, needs, and abilities <b>Aw</b>



# WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY?

Self-advocacy is a skill that enables kids to understand their strengths and weaknesses, know what they need to succeed, and communicate that to other people.

Self-advocacy can be broken down into a few key elements:

- **Understanding** specific needs.
- **Knowing** what help or support will address those needs, like tutoring or classroom *accommodations*.
- **Communicating** those needs to teachers and others.



# SUGGESTIONS FOR INTRODUCING THEIR DISABILITY

- Focus on the child and not the disability:
  - love and cherish your child and his unique characteristics
  - recognize that your child is more like his/ her peers than different
  - use person-first language and language the student will understand
- Be knowledgeable about your child's strengths, talents, gifts, interests and learning differences.
  - Begin discussion by talking about the strengths, gifts interests and learning differences of everyone in the family
- Educate, don't excuse:
  - Discuss role models
  - Stress coping and learning strategies
  - Know that the expectations that you have for your children greatly influence their achievements for themselves
  - Children with disabilities are often unmotivated due to feelings of failure, frustration and false labels (crazy, lazy, dumb)
- Provide feedback for your child
  - Praise progress and effort as well as results
  - Give honest and specific compliments
  - Provide corrective criticism when warranted
  - Know that by talking to your child, you are modeling skills they will need to be self-determined





# WHY SHOULD YOUR CHILD BE INVOLVED IN THEIR IEP OR SECTION 504 PLAN?

- It's about them!
- Builds self-advocacy skills and self-esteem
- Gives your child some control over their education
- Builds important social and conversational skills
- Teaches the processes of decision-making, goal setting and achievement



# HOW TO GET YOUR CHILD INVOLVED IN THEIR IEP OR SECTION 504 PLAN

- [Learn what is an IEP or a Section 504 Plan](#)
- [IEP Participation Brochure from I'm Determined](#)
- Have your child complete a [One-Pager](#) to share with the team
- Have your child complete a [Goal Plan](#) to share with the team
- Have your child create a [PowerPoint presentation](#). Let them be creative!
- Have your child provide work samples they would like the team to see
- [A Sample Agenda for a Student Led IEP Meeting](#)
- Have your child complete a [Self-Awareness Worksheet](#)
- Have your child complete [Back-to-School Introduction Letters](#) for their teachers
- Have your child complete a [Get to know me card](#) for their teacher
- Have your child talk to their teachers about their IEP or Section 504 Plan and explain their classroom needs



# ASKING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

The purpose of an accommodation is to provide a student with equal access to learning and an equal opportunity to show what he knows and what he can do.

- By knowing the accommodations that are included in their IEP or Section 504 Plan, your child will be better able to advocate for what they need.
- The older your child gets, the more they will be able to tell you what works for them in the classroom. By being involved, they can voice to the team any accommodations that will help them be successful.



# RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Resources available for how to get your child involved in the IEP process:

- [I'm Determined](#)
  - [Parent Path to Success](#)
- [Understood.org](#)
  - Families Section
    - Friends & Feelings
      - [Empowering Your Child](#)
- [The Pacer Center](#)
  - [How You Can Help Your Child Learn to Be a Good Self-Advocate](#)
- Edutopia
  - [Bringing Student Voice Into IEP Conversations](#)



# FOR EDUCATORS

Resources available for how to get a student and/or parents involved in the IEP process:

- I'm Determined
  - [Educators Section](#)
- Edutopia
  - [Bringing Student Voice Into IEP Conversations](#)
- Understood.org
  - [Educators Section](#)
- [The Pacer Center](#)



# FINAL THOUGHTS

- Try, Try, Try ...
  - Often your child's first attempt to be part of the IEP process won't go how you imagined and that is okay.
  - There will be growth every year once you start the process.
- Don't be afraid of what your child will say- their honesty is important.
  - It is very important information for educators to hear the student voice.
- Discuss with the team ahead of time how long your child should be in the meeting, what you are planning, and how everyone can support a positive outcome.
- Pick a few things to start with and expand with time.
- Teach your child the language of their disability in an age appropriate way.





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THANK YOU