



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH THE YEARS

SPECIAL EDUCATION
RESOURCE SERIES



OLENTANGY SCHOOLSSM
Flourish Here.

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GOALS FOR THIS PRESENTATION

- Discuss the need to have your child involved in their educational journey
- Teach you the importance of self-determination and self-advocacy
- Enable you to think of age-appropriate skills your child can be learning and practicing to foster independence
- Share resources to help you at home



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



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.

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



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



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



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE - ELEMENTARY

Here are some ideas to consider to foster independence in your Elementary School age child:

- Ordering their own meal if you go to a restaurant
- Cleaning their room: a to-do list might help (ex: pulling bedspread up, putting dirty clothes in hamper, putting books on the shelf)
- Chores around house: make an age appropriate task list for them to follow, either in words or pictures based on your child's ability
- Have a schedule at home for kids to follow: before school (ex: get dressed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, comb hair, pack backpack); after school (ex: unpack school folder, eat snack, do homework)



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE - ELEMENTARY

- Executive Function Skills : Organization, Planning/Prioritizing, Task Initiation/Task Completion, Working Memory, Self-Monitoring/Self-Checking, Flexibility/Shifting, Emotional Control/Self-Regulation, Impulse Control/Inhibition
- For behavior: have a chart or rubric for tracking (is there a reward or incentive it's tied to?)
- Don't forget that our children thrive on a routine and consistency, so keep this up during the summertime.



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE - MIDDLE SCHOOL

Here are some ideas to consider to foster independence in your Middle School age child:

- Use a system of their choosing to organize schoolwork and keep track of homework
- Communicating with teachers - have your child draft a Schoology message (with you to start)
- Using an alarm clock to wake up in the morning
- Executive Function Skills : Organization, Planning/Prioritizing, Task Initiation/ Task Completion, Working Memory, Self-Monitoring/Self-Checking, Flexibility/Shifting, Emotional Control/ Self-Regulation, Impulse Control/ Inhibition



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE - MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Summertime: in order to prevent the dreaded screen time battle, make a list of things that need to be accomplished prior to using any screens.
- Asking for Accommodations: 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.



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE - HIGH SCHOOL

Here are some ideas to consider to foster independence in your High School age child:

- Laundry, money management, cooking, calling to make appointments, medication management, time management, keeping track of their own homework, messaging their teachers in general (with questions, when they submit assignments past the due date etc).
- Executive Function Skills : Organization, Planning/Prioritizing, Task Initiation/ Task Completion, Working Memory, Self-Monitoring/Self-Checking, Flexibility/Shifting, Emotional Control/ Self-Regulation, Impulse Control/ Inhibition



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE - HIGH SCHOOL

- 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

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](#)



RESOURCES

Resources available for practicing life skills:

- Games: Should I or Shouldn't I, Guess Who, Headbandz, Let's Talk, Whoonu, Would you Rather, Bubble Talk
- [Personalized Social Stories](#)
- [Social Thinking](#)
- [Life Skills Yearly Calendar](#)
- [Daily Life Skills Big Book](#)



FINAL THOUGHTS

- Try, Try, Try ...
- Often we do many of these things for our kids because it's just faster if we do it, but if we don't teach them and let them try, how will they learn?
- 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