

What is Self-Determination?

- Skills, knowledge, and beliefs that allow a person to:
 - Believe in themselves
 - Know their own strengths and weaknesses
 - Manage their own feelings and behavior
 - Work with other people
 - Make choices and solve problems
 - Set goals and achieve them
 - Be a leader in their own lives

Why is Self-Determination Important?

- Everyone communicates, and that voice should be heard and respected
- Regardless of ability or disability, everyone has the need and the right to make decisions for themselves
- Everyone has strengths, and everyone should be given the opportunity to try to reach their own goals
- Self-determined students are more likely to be motivated, persistent, and optimistic about their own lives

Resources

The LINK Center, a transition project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs
www.fcsn.org/linkcenter

MA ESE Special Education Secondary Transition Website
www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-2: Promoting Student Self-Determination to Improve Student Outcomes
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2016-2ta.pdf>

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities, www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure

The I'm Determined Project from the Virginia Department of Education, <http://www.imdetermined.org>



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FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Federation for Children with Special Needs

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TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs

(Ages 14-22)



Self-Determination

A series of brochures produced by
The LINK Center - a project of the
Federation for Children with Special Needs,
and the Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE)

Self-Determination for Students: What you need to know...

TIP 1: Students will have better college and career outcomes if...

- They know why, how, when, and to whom to disclose their disabilities
- They know their strengths and weaknesses
- They understand the supports they need at different times throughout the day
- They can share their opinions and advocate for themselves
- They can ask for the support they need
- They can choose a trustworthy person to guide and mentor them

Each student has a different level of independence and need for support, but everyone can be self-determined.

TIP 2: If students are self-determined...

- They feel respected, and this can lead to positive behaviors and attitudes
- They are more in control of their decisions, rather than having decisions made for them
- They stand up for themselves and are less likely to become victims
- They can make good things happen for themselves and others

Students with disabilities should be treated the same as all students.

TIP 3: The IEP Team can develop a strong transition plan when self-determined students and families...

- Describe how the student interacts at home, in the community, and in different social settings
- Share what the student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do related to work, education, living and participation in the community
- Discuss how the student is building self-determination skills outside of school
- Ask how the school is supporting the student to learn self-determination skills



Promoting Self-Determination in Different Settings

In school, students can be supported to learn self-determination skills by:

- Learning how to participate in – and even run – their own IEP meeting
- Using an Individual Learning Plan to map out their goals
- Sharing with a teacher which accommodations will help them to be successful in class
- Choosing what to eat for lunch
- Problem solving about an argument with a friend
- Taking on a leadership role in a group
- Filling out their own Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Choosing Assistive Technology that works best for them
- Using a daily or weekly planner

At home, students can be supported to learn self-determination skills by:

- Choosing the college that's right for them, including learning about Disability Support options
- Taking their medication without reminders or calling the doctor to make an appointment
- Applying for and holding a summer job
- Managing their own money
- Doing their own laundry or preparing a meal
- Choosing what to do on the weekend
- Picking out their own clothes
- Asking a date to the prom
- Traveling on public transportation or learning to drive
- Volunteering with a local service organization

Research shows that self-determination skills help students to be successful in college and career.