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PROJECT 10 TOPICAL BRIEFS are published on a bi-monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme, highlighting current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition. This month the Topical Brief is focused on Self-Determination.



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Self-Determination: The Skills We Need to Effectively Manage Our Lives

All of us, regardless of any other descriptors, need self-determination skills to do the following:

- Understand our strengths and needs.
- Control our own behaviors and actions.
- Set and accomplish goals.
- Make choices and decisions.
- Solve problems.
- Speak up for ourselves and others.
- Believe in ourselves and our ability to succeed.
- Believe that we have the ability to control the outcomes of our lives.



This Topical Brief focuses on self-determination and self-advocacy skills and their relationship to students with disabilities and their transition to post-school life.

Self-Determination Emphasized in Florida Legislation

In July 2021, section 1003.5716, Florida Statutes (F.S.) was amended by House Bill 173 to include the "consideration of the student's need for instruction in the area of self-determination and self-advocacy to assist the student's active and effective participation in an individual educational plan (IEP) meeting." This new focus in legislation communicates the recognition of the importance of these skills in students' abilities to direct their own lives as evidenced in their ability to participate in and lead their IEP meetings.

When acting with self-determination and self-advocacy, students "have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults in our society" (Field et al., 1998, p. 10).



Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Guide

One of the unique features of this guide is that it can be used by both teachers in the general education classroom and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers in self-contained classrooms. Sections included in the guide are as follows:

Section 1 - Describing the Need

This section describes some of the big reasons why self-determination development is

so important for students with disabilities.

Section 2 - Defining Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

Self-determination is defined here as well as self-advocacy. Self-advocacy is an element of self-determination and has been identified as a "power component".

Section 3 - Self-Determination Instruction

This section addresses the importance of the teacher's role in the students' successful development of self-determination skills. The universal design for learning (UDL) framework is highlighted as an ideal instructional strategy for teaching self-determination.

Section 4 - Instructional Ideas for Teaching Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

Here you will find instructional ideas organized under each of the elements of self-determination. These ideas can be used in a variety of classroom settings.

Section 5 - Self-Determination and the Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

When students use self-determination skills to participate in and lead their IEP meetings, they are taking part in setting a direction for their lives. This section offers suggestions for the following:

- Determining whether a student needs instruction in self-determination.
- Taking action to ensure that the student's self-determination needs are met.
- Identifying strategies to assess the student's self-determination gains.

Section 6 - Self-Determination: An Ongoing Process

Here you will find a link to a Self-Awareness Worksheet for Adults. The reality is that self-determination not only applies to all students, it applies to all people. This section encourages personal self-reflection to assess the self-determination skills that may need strengthening in your life.

Section 7 - Resources and References

Find resources here for assessing students' self-determination skills and teaching self-determination skill development.

Find Project 10's [Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Guide](#) on the publications page of our website.

Resources

[I'm Determined](#)

This website is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education and houses a plethora of self-determination resources.

[Standing Up for Me - Plus \(SUFM+\)](#)

This curriculum for high school students is available by contacting your Regional Transition Representative for a training. *Note: this curriculum can be used in full or in part. Many lessons include bell-ringer ideas that can easily be used in multiple educational settings.

[Transition Assessment Chart](#)

This document provides a list of formal and informal transition assessments

that range from aptitude tests to questionnaires and interest inventories. Information for finding the assessments online is provided.

[Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment](#)

This website contains free self-determination curriculum and student assessments.



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Project 10: Transition Education Network

Assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

Project 10: Transition Education Network

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Questions or comments?

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