

Youth Self Advocacy Toolkit

Self-Advocacy is learning how to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your own life, learning how to get information so that you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out who will support you in your journey, knowing your rights and responsibilities, problem solving, listening and learning, reaching out to others when you need help and friendship, and learning about self-determination.



Why is Self-Advocacy Important? So that youth have the knowledge needed to succeed and are given the chance to participate in decisions that are being made about their life.

The following information is a compilation of self-advocacy resources to assist youth and young adults with disabilities in building these critical skills.

ACCESSING THE DREAM: PREPARING DEAF-BLIND YOUTH FOR A SELF-DETERMINED LIFE

All young adults who are deaf-blind need extensive transition planning and services in order to experience success in adult life. Transition Institutes have historically sought to bring together young adults and their families to build skills and provide training in the pursuit of better personal transition outcomes. These institutes are a collaborative effort across 21 State Deaf-Blind Projects over a span of 10 years. The energy of the 2012 and 2015 Transition Institutes provided opportunities to capture interviews with youth, families, and service providers to share their perspectives on the experience of transition.

This video product is based on the [Taxonomy for Transition Programming](#) developed by Paula D. Kohler, Ph.D. The video chapters offer insight and understanding based on foundational best practices in transition planning: Student-Focused Planning, Student Development, Interagency Collaboration, Program Structure, and Family Involvement.

View the collection of videos at: <https://nationaldb.org/pages/show/accessing-the-dream-preparing-deaf-blind-youth-for-a-self-determined-life>



Alabama Parent Education Center 

PO Box 118 * Wetumpka AL, 36092 * 334-567-2252 *866-532-7660

www.alabamaparentcenter.com

Youth Self Advocacy Toolkit

OPENING THE DOORS TO SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

This 26-page handbook, subtitled *Planning for Life After High School*, deals with the skills that students will need no matter what option they choose after high school. Self-determination is a mix of skills youth and young adults with disabilities will use throughout their lives. These skills include their personal beliefs and values and skills that empower them to make choices and take control of their lives according to their own interests, needs, and abilities. Self-advocacy is the process of speaking for themselves and knowledge of their rights, wishes, needs, and strengths.

Access the handbook in PDF, at:

<http://files.ctctcdn.com/88c2be7a001/3723af0b-ce16-4a13-aa08-be6f8d79f913.pdf>

What's in the Handbook: The handbook is designed as a guide to help students with disabilities take another step in preparing for "life after high school." Published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the handbook includes:

- an overview of self-determination skills
- timelines for developing self-determination skills (starting in elementary school)
- differences between public high school and adult services
- A worksheet called "Knowing Yourself."



Speaking directly to youth, the handbook guides their personal exploration of possible goal areas, assessing their future, reaching goals one step at a time, acting on goals, problem solving, and learning from experience. It concludes with creating a personal profile, looking at person-centered planning, and suggestions for who to invite to their next IEP meeting.

THE ART OF IMPACT: A HANDBOOK FOR SELF-DETERMINED LIVING

The Art of Impact explores the power of self-advocacy. It presents the thoughts of a core group of committed leaders on the Self-Advocate Leadership Circle of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD). The book shares tips, tools, and strategies for advocacy to help people with disabilities live self-determined lives and become advocates for change.

The eBook is available on a computer or a variety of mobile devices, including an iPad or a Smartphone; it can also be printed for people that would prefer a paper version. It was written by a self-advocate, with this message for those with disabilities: "This is your life and you have the right to speak for yourself and to be involved in the decisions that impact your life."



Alabama Parent Education Center 

PO Box 118 * Wetumpka AL, 36092 * 334-567-2252 *866-532-7660

www.alabamaparentcenter.com

Youth Self Advocacy Toolkit

The Art of Impact is written in easy-to-understand language and speaks directly to “you”—where the “you” is the budding self-advocate. It’s divided into 4 chapters:

- An Introduction to Self-Advocacy
- NACDD’s Leadership Circle
- Learning and Practicing Self-advocacy
- Becoming an Effective Leader

Access the eBook online at: <http://www.startyourjourney.org/>

MAKING THE MOVE TO MANAGING YOUR OWN PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES: A TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH

Transitioning into adulthood can be awkward for nearly every young person. For transition-age youth with disabilities, issues surrounding managing Personal Assistance Services (PAS) can be intensified by normal developmental concerns such as striking out on your own and navigating the road into adulthood. Accessing and maintaining long-term supports, such as PAS, has often been a significant barrier to employment for youth and adults with disabilities.

This guide from the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth assists youth in strengthening some of the most fundamental skills essential for successfully managing their own PAS: effective communication, time-management, working with others, and establishing professional relationships. Such skills are key to not only enhancing independence, but also thriving in the workplace and growing professionally. Topics covered include:

- Understanding the differences between job-related and personal PAS;
- Evaluating individual readiness to live independently and manage PAS;
- Establishing goals in transitioning to greater independence;
- Identifying individual PAS needs;
- Considering a service dog;
- Advertising for, interviewing, and hiring personal assistants;
- Covering the costs of PAS;
- Managing and training assistants;
- Handling awkward moments with personal assistants;
- Recognizing abusive situations; and
- Firing personal assistants.

Whether moving from school or a home setting to work, college, or living on their own, transition-age youth and their families or friends would benefit from the information and guidance offered by the toolkit. Sample



Alabama Parent Education Center 

PO Box 118 * Wetumpka AL, 36092 * 334-567-2252 *866-532-7660

www.alabamaparentcenter.com

Youth Self Advocacy Toolkit

worksheets, questions, and charts provide readers clear, helpful examples of things to consider along the path to greater independence. And stories from real youth and their families give practical insight and guidance for youth with disabilities who want to manage their own PAS.

The toolkit is available in PDF and as a Word document. There's also a companion video featuring youth with disabilities who use PAS and several related tip sheets, including:

- PAS Toolkit Factsheet (PDF, 498 KB)
- Identifying What You're Looking for in a Personal Assistant (PDF, 492 KB)
- Independent Living Checklist (PDF, 498 KB)
- Thinking Outside the Box: Service Dogs (PDF, 517 KB)

Access to toolkit and related tip sheets, at: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/pas-toolkit>

Access the companion video, which features youth with disabilities who use PAS, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOeGDUlqy_g&feature=youtu.be

THE LIFE SKILLS MANUAL

The *Life Skills Manual* is an evidence-based curriculum that provides the content and resources needed to teach life skills to individuals who need assistance in this area. The curriculum is designed to be implemented in 6 group sessions, with an individual workbook to help consumers individualize the group content at their own pace. Facilitator's guides are provided for every group and individual activity. Numerous handouts allow for uniformity and application. The entire curriculum is meant to be adaptable to a wide range of settings. Service providers can adjust the pace and intensity of the material as they see fit for a particular population.



The content was created in partnership with individuals who were trying to live independently in the community, individuals who were homeless, service delivery workers from a range of disciplines that work with individuals for whom life skills are challenging, peer leaders, peer recovery specialists, and various consultants in order to create an effective, feasible, and age-appropriate curriculum.

Electronic copies of the manual are free. Simply complete an order form, provide your email address, and you'll be emailed the manual or the module(s) that interest you. Also available in Spanish.

To request the English manual:

<http://naric.com/?q=en/content/order-life-skills-manual>

To request the Spanish manual:

<http://naric.com/?q=es/content/ordene-el-manual-de-habilidades-para-la-vida>



Alabama Parent Education Center 

PO Box 118 * Wetumpka AL, 36092 * 334-567-2252 * 866-532-7660

www.alabamaparentcenter.com

Youth Self Advocacy Toolkit

GETTING READY FOR WHEN YOUR TEEN REACHES THE AGE OF MAJORITY: A PARENT'S GUIDE

When young people with disabilities reach the “age of majority,” they gain the right to manage their own affairs, including where they will live and what they will do. In most states, this happens at age 18. Legally considered as adults, they may take charge of their own housing and daily-life decisions, both large and small. But will they be ready to make such decisions for themselves? Will they have the skills and basic information they need to live as independently as possible?

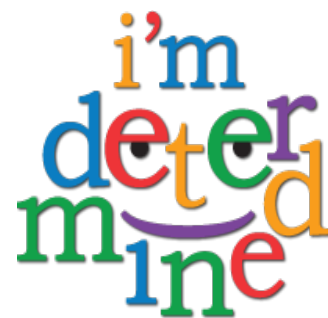
This tip sheet considers steps that you (as parents) and others (such as teachers or transition specialists) can take to help your young person with disabilities learn and practice the basic skills that underpin independent living, skills that will certainly come in handy in the future.

Access the guide at the following: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/age-of-majority-parentguide/>

I'M DETERMINED PROJECT

The I'm Determined project, a state directed project funded by the Virginia Department of Education, focuses on providing direct instruction, models, and opportunities to practice skills associated with self-determined behavior. The project facilitates youth, especially those with disabilities to undertake a measure of control in their lives helping to set and steer the course rather than remaining the silent passenger. Visit the site to learn more about great resources to promote quality instruction that assists students to become Self-Determined advocates.

Visit: <http://www.imdetermined.org/>



SELF-ADVOCACY: KNOW YOURSELF, KNOW WHAT YOU NEED, KNOW HOW TO GET IT

[Self-Advocacy: Know Yourself, Know What You Need, Know How to Get It](#) by Nancy Suzanne James Johnson. “Self-advocacy is the ability to understand and communicate one’s needs to other individuals. Learning to become an effective self-advocate is all about educating the people around you. There are three steps to becoming an effective self-advocate.

Visit: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/sec504.selfadvo.nancy.james.htm>



Youth Self Advocacy Toolkit

CHART YOUR OWN FUTURE

Chart Your Own Future. What will you be doing after high school? Where will you be working, going to school, or living? What kind of life do you want? Find out “How Your Individualized Education Program (IEP) Can Help”. Visit: <http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c113.pdf>

HOW CAN MY CHILD BE INVOLVED IN THE IEP PROCESS

Children need as much practice in self-advocacy as possible before they turn 18, when parental rights transfer to the special education student. Self-advocacy skills prepare students for the world and their future beyond high school. Visit: <http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c77.pdf>

SELF-ADVOCACY: A VALUABLE SKILL FOR YOUR TEENAGER

Self-Advocacy: A Valuable Skill for Your Teenager. Self-advocacy is understanding your strengths and needs, identifying your personal goals, knowing your legal rights and responsibilities, and communicating these to others. Visit: <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/self-advocacy-teenager-with-ld/>

ADVOCACY AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Advocacy and Why It's Important. This article from Kids as Self-Advocates (KASA) explains that advocacy is speaking out on an issue that concerns you. This can mean talking to a policymaker about a law, talking to your teachers about your IEP or talking with your parents about something you want to do.



Visit: <http://fvkasa.org/resources/files/civil-advocacy-imp.php>

NAVIGATING COLLEGE HANDBOOK

From the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network -An introduction to the college experience from those who've been there. The writers and contributors are Autistic adults, and who give you the advice that we wish someone could have given us when we headed off to college. We wish we could sit down and have a chat with each of you, to share our experiences and answer your questions. Visit: <http://navigatingcollege.org/>



Alabama Parent Education Center 

PO Box 118 * Wetumpka AL, 36092 * 334-567-2252 *866-532-7660

www.alabamaparentcenter.com

Youth Self Advocacy Toolkit

SELF-ADVOCACY GUIDES

The Arizona Center for Disability Law offers several self-advocacy guides covering different disability-related legal issues free of charge. The guides cover topics such as employment, discrimination, assistive technology, special education, and more. Visit: <https://www.azdisabilitylaw.org/guides/>

ACTIVATE YOUR STUDENT IEP TEAM MEMBER USING TECHNOLOGY

The skills of self-determination and self-advocacy are essential for success in adult life. We want students with disabilities to participate and be significantly involved in the development and implementation of their IEPs, including involvement in IEP and transition planning meetings.

Visit: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ967097.pdf>

STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY ON THE IEP TEAM

As children get older, it may be a good idea to encourage them to take a more active role. This allows them to have a strong voice in their own education and can teach them a great deal about self-advocacy and self-determination.



Visit: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/iep/>

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES

KASA Resources. Over 60 tip sheets and guides written for youth, by youth! The reports in each of these sections are written by youth with disabilities on our Advisory Board and youth writers from our network. They are written to share real life experiences and helpful information with other youth.

Visit: <http://fvkasa.org/resources/index.php>

Advocating Change Together (ACT) is a grassroots disability rights organization run by and for people with developmental and other disabilities. ACT's mission is to help people across disabilities to see themselves as part of a larger disability rights movement and make connections to other civil and human rights struggles.

Visit: <http://selfadvocacy.org/>

Youthhood. Childhood meets adulthood at Youthhood.org. Here you can start thinking about what you want to do with the rest of your life. This Web site was built to help you plan for the future.

Visit: <http://www.youthhood.org/index.asp>



Alabama Parent Education Center 

PO Box 118 * Wetumpka AL, 36092 * 334-567-2252 *866-532-7660

www.alabamaparentcenter.com

Youth Self Advocacy Toolkit

The Arc of the U.S. is the world's largest grassroots organization of and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Visit: <http://www.thearc.org/>

[Position Statement on Self-Advocacy from the Arc of the U.S.](#) People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities must be able to act as self-advocates, to exercise their rights by speaking and standing up for themselves. This means people must have a voice in decision-making in all areas of their daily life and in public policy decisions affecting them. Visit: <http://www.thearc.org/page.aspx?pid=2358>

ADAPT <http://www.adapt.org>

People First USA <http://www.peoplefirst.org/usa/>

Inclusion Research Institute <http://www.inclusionresearch.org>

People First of Missouri <http://www.missouripeoplefirst.org/>

People First of New Hampshire <http://www.peoplefirstofnh.org>

Self-Advocate Leadership Network <http://www.hsri.org/leaders/>

Self-Advocacy: Transition Tool Kit from Autism Speaks <http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/transition-tool-kit/self-advocacy>

Speak Up: Your Guide to Self-Advocacy from Disability Scoop
<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2009/07/21/self-advocacy/4203/>

Autism Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) <http://autisticadvocacy.org/>

LD Self-Advocacy Manual from LD Pride <http://www.ldpride.net/selfadvocacy.htm>

Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered <http://www.sabeusa.org>

Wrightslaw's self-advocacy. <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/self.advocacy.htm>.

YOUR OPINION IS IMPORTANT

Thank you for using our self-advocacy compilation. Do you have suggestions for additions to this toolkit please visit and give us your feedback. Please tell us what you think at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ALPTI>



APEC IS HERE TO HELP

APEC's AL PTI provides free training, information, and consultation to families schools, and communities. Visit our training calendar for more information about learning opportunities at www.alabamaparentcenter.com or call our center. The contents of this publication were developed in part under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M150012. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Gregory Knollman Transition V.6



Alabama Parent Education Center 

PO Box 118 * Wetumpka AL, 36092 * 334-567-2252 *866-532-7660

www.alabamaparentcenter.com

Page 8 of 8

