

# SELF-DETERMINATION

*for students with disabilities*

TRANSITION  
PLANNING  
AT-A-GLANCE SERIES

"Students who are self-determined act autonomously (make choices and decision as needed), are self-regulated (have some personal control over actions), are psychologically empowered (feel and act capable), and are self-realizing (understand the effects of their actions).

Youth can begin to be self-determined by learning problem-solving and decision-making, self-advocacy and self-regulation, goal setting and attainment, and self-management techniques."

*Self-Determination.org*



Use this at-a-glance document to develop an understanding of what schools must do to ensure these critical skills are developed according to each student's strengths and needs.

## SELF DETERMINATION IN THE LAW

### ► TEC §29.011

- "appropriate student involvement in the student's transition to life outside the public school system"
- appropriate parent and supporter involvement in the transition planning process
- "the use and availability of appropriate . . .
  - » supplementary aids, services, curricula, and opportunities to assist the student in developing decision-making skills
  - » supports and services to foster the student's independence and self-determination, including a supported decision-making agreement"

### ► TEC §29.012

- Texas Transition & Employment Guide must include information about:
  - » Guardianship alternatives, including supported decision-making agreements
  - » Self-advocacy, person-directed planning, and self-determination

► TEC §29.017: required notices for transfer of rights must include "information and resources" regarding alternatives to guardianship and "other supports and services that may enable the student to live independently"

► CFR §300.43 "transition services . . . based on the individual child's strengths, preferences, and interests"

► Chapter 1357 of Texas Estates Code: Supported Decision-Making Agreements



## SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE IEP

- Annual goals that reflect core components of self-determination
- Coordinated set of activities that identifies what the student will be responsible to complete
- Support for students in preparing for and participating in ARD meetings
- Support for students in reflecting on ARD meetings and developing strategies to meet their IEP goals

## SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE CLASSROOM

- Use curricula to plan lessons that incorporate the skills for core components of self-determination.
- Create daily opportunities to practice skills in all settings.
- Identify choices within activities/lessons/assignments.
- Ask students for feedback about classroom practices.

## SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE COMMUNITY

- Assign "homework" to practice skills outside of school.
- Allow students to give input about community-based instruction sites.
- Identify ways each student can practice core components such as self-advocacy and choice-making during community-based instruction or work-based learning experiences.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF ENVIRONMENTS THAT ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT SELF-DETERMINATION

- Availability of self-determined role models
- Curriculum variables
- Opportunities for choice
- Patterns of response to student behaviors
- Availability of student supports

Self-Determination Strategies for Adolescents in Transition  
(Field, Hoffman, Spezia)

- How does self-determination fit into other school initiatives (positive behavior supports, social-emotional learning, etc)?
- Who might have resources that align to self-determination (counselors, behavior specialists, others)?
- What needs to happen to ensure that all educators, administrators, and students understand and support **ability** awareness for people with disabilities?

## SCHOOL-WIDE PLANNING FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

Review the framework below and consider your campus/district. What will be available for ALL students? What is the expectation for MOST students? What other options are available according to student need or level of skill?

### ALL STUDENTS WILL

- be invited to their ARD meetings;
- have the opportunity to review key elements of their IEP;
- participate in transition assessments;
- receive a Summary of Performance (SOP) during final year of eligibility;
- have opportunities to practice using their SOP to share information about their strengths, interests, and needs; and
- receive direct instruction in self-determination skills.

### MOST STUDENTS WILL

- prepare for the ARD meeting by discussing agenda with case manager.
- participate in the ARD meeting.
- practice disclosing information about the disability and needed supports,
- develop a resume as part of career preparation/work-based learning, and
- develop the Summary of Performance in collaboration with school team/ARD committee members.

### SOME STUDENTS WILL

- lead the entire ARD meeting,
- mentor other students in gaining or practicing self-determination skills, and
- participate in the development of a "visual resume" or personal profile to help communicate strengths/interests/needs.



## CORE COMPONENTS OF SELF-DETERMINATION

- **Choice-making:** the skill of making a choice between two known options
- **Decision-making:** the skill of choosing among more than two known options
- **Problem-solving:** the skill used when a solution is not readily known; decision-making and choice making are part of process
- **Goal setting and attainment:** the skill of determining how you are going to accomplish what you want (setting the goal, planning for implementation, and measuring success).
- **Self-regulation** (skills include self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement): the process of monitoring one's own actions
- **Self-instruction:** skills that assist the student in using his or her own verbal prompts for solving problem
- **Self-advocacy:** skills necessary to be able to speak up or defend a cause or person
- **Internal locus of control:** the belief that one has control over outcomes that are important to life
- **Self-efficacy:** the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce a given outcome
- **Efficacy expectations:** the belief that if a specific behavior is performed, it will lead to anticipated outcomes
- **Self-awareness and self-knowledge:** the skills of knowing one's own strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and limitations AND knowing how to use these unique attributions to beneficially influence one's own life

[www.imdetermined.org](http://www.imdetermined.org)

## MAKING DECISIONS DURING ADULthood

- **Full independence:** no structured supports, informal consultation from friends/family as needed
- **Supported decision-making agreement:** a tool that allows people with disabilities to keep their ability to make decisions by choosing someone to help them make choices
- **Power of attorney:** a legal document that allows an individual to delegate the authority to make decisions (medical, financial, or otherwise) to a third party
- **Guardianship:** the legal process to determine if a person is "incapacitated." Someone is appointed to make decisions on behalf of the incapacitated person or "ward."

*Adapted from "The Right To Make Choices: A Supported Decision-Making Toolkit for People with Disabilities and Their Supporters" (Disability Rights Texas)*

## TIMELINE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

**Early childhood:** opportunities for choice-making, self-regulation, and problem-solving during play and other activities

**Elementary:** learning to identify strengths, struggles, and learning style; learning purpose and contents of IEP and having the choice to attend ARD meetings

**Middle School:** increased opportunities for independence, involvement in ARD meetings, and self-awareness

**High School:** increased ownership of IEP goals and transition planning process; developing skills for requesting support/disability disclosure

**Adulthood:** continuing learning and practicing skills for independence, with supports as preferred

"The development of self-determination skills is a process that begins in childhood and continues throughout one's life. Self-determination is important for all people, but it is especially important, and often more difficult to learn, for young people with disabilities. Well-meaning individuals sometimes 'protect' children with disabilities by making all their decisions for them. Also, sometimes people assume that people with disabilities can't think for themselves."

-PACER Center

[www.esc13.net/transition](http://www.esc13.net/transition)



## RESOURCES

State Network for Secondary Transition/Post-School Results	<a href="http://transitionintexas.org">transitionintexas.org</a>
National Center on Secondary Education And Transition (NCSET)	<a href="http://ncset.org">ncset.org</a>
Institute for Person-Centered Practices	<a href="http://person-centered-practices.org">person-centered-practices.org</a>
Transition Coalition (University of Kansas)	<a href="http://transitioncoalition.org">transitioncoalition.org</a>
<i>Supported Decision-Making Toolkit</i> from Disability Rights Texas	<a href="http://drtx.org">drtx.org</a>
Arc of Texas	<a href="http://thearcoftexas.org">thearcoftexas.org</a>
National Gateway to Self-Determination	<a href="http://ngsd.org">ngsd.org</a>
National Parent Center on Transition and Employment (PACER Center)	<a href="http://pacer.org">pacer.org</a>
DCDT Fast Fact sheet on Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy	<a href="http://community.cec.sped.org/dcdt/publications/fast-facts">community.cec.sped.org/dcdt/publications/fast-facts</a>

TRANSITION ASSESSMENT	CURRICULUM	TOOLS FOR ASSESSING/TEACHING SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS
✓	✓	<b>College and Career Competencies Framework:</b> <a href="http://cccframework.org">cccframework.org</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student questionnaires</li> <li>• Teacher guides and other resources</li> <li>• Printable poster for each competency</li> </ul>
✓	✓	<b>Zarrow Center (University of Oklahoma):</b> <a href="http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow.html">www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow.html</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ChoiceMaker Self Determination Curriculum and Lesson Packages</li> <li>• Whose Future Is It, Anyway? (Student-Directed Transition Planning Process)</li> <li>• Self-Determination Assessments (Choicemaker, AIR, ARC)</li> <li>• ME! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy</li> </ul>
	✓	<b>411 on Disability Disclosure:</b> <a href="http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure">www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure</a>
✓	✓	<b>I'm Determined (Virginia Department of Education):</b> <a href="http://www.imdetermined.org">www.imdetermined.org</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Determination Checklists (elementary/secondary; student/parent/teacher/Spanish)</li> <li>• IEP Participation Rubric and Exit Assessments (elementary/secondary; student/parent/teacher)</li> <li>• Toolbox for Self-Determination</li> </ul>
✓	✓	<b><a href="http://www.self-determination.org">www.self-determination.org</a></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction: Teacher's Guide</li> <li>• Self-Determination Inventories (student/parent)</li> </ul>

## CONTACT:

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## TRANSITION PLANNING AT-A-GLANCE SERIES:

- Transition to Adulthood
- Summary of Performance
- Career Connections
- 18+ Programs & Services
- Educator's Guide to Agencies & Adult Supports
- Self-Determination