Transition

Preparing for the Future

Self-Determination

Self-Advocacy

the parents' place of Maryland

Families play an important role in supporting their student to build skills to become the main decision maker in their life. The process of moving from being dependent on family to making decisions based on their own views and preferences occurs throughout childhood and into adulthood. This is an essential part of **transition planning.**

Self-determination is the ability to be the primary decision maker, make plans and set goals for your path in life, by knowing and believing in yourself.

Self-advocacy is about speaking up for yourself, getting 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, and asking for help.

Tips to Build Skills

- Start small with teachable moments
- Build choice into daily activities
- Talk about what the student is good at and what they need help with
- Make a list of people and programs that support the student
- Learn how to communicate in way that works best (video, picture, text, verbal)
- Add explicit instruction of skills into the IEP

Common Challenges

- Student is present but not actively involved because supports are not in place
- Self advocate not seen as decision maker
- Student not being allowed the dignity of risk
- Learned helplessness can be an outcome if students do not develop skills for decision making
- Student not participating in IEP and transition planning

Students need as much practice in self-advocacy and self-determination as possible **before** they turn 18, when parental rights transfer to the young adult. Developing these skills prepares the student for the world and their future beyond high school.

Opportunities are all around us to practice...why not start now!

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