

# A Focus on Self-Determination can contribute to Transition Across the Ages

Children and youth with disabilities often need support to learn and do things that will help them later in life. Self-determination relates to the interests, choices, decisions, problems that are solved, goals that are set, and the awareness that a student has about what they want to do after they graduate. Parents can support the development of self-determination abilities for their children.

People experience many transitions over time. Seamless transitions throughout life can occur with cooperation and collaboration between students, their family, educators, service providers, and the community.

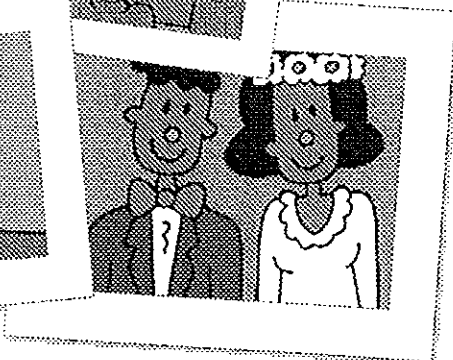
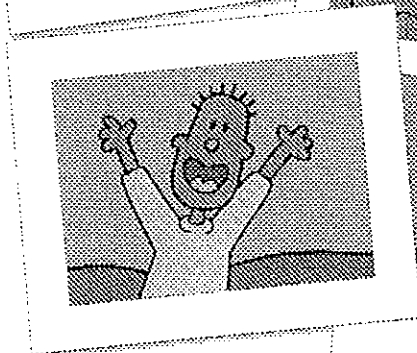
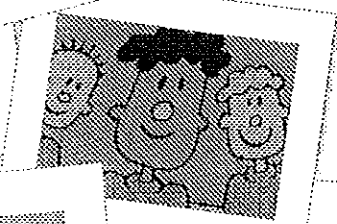
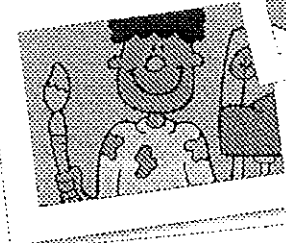
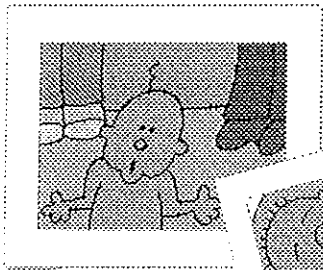
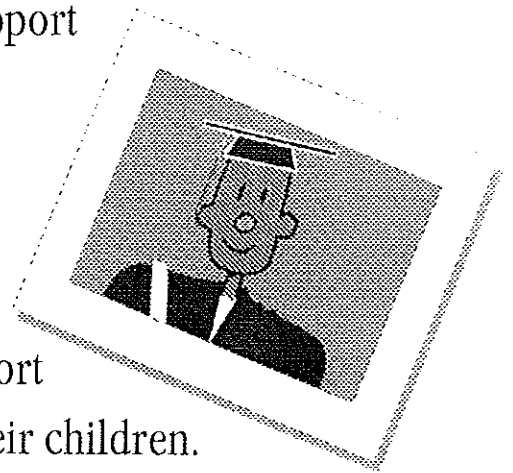
This chart contains suggestions for children, youth and adults divided into

the following categories: Birth through Age Two, Ages Three to Five, Elementary School, Middle School, High School, and Adult. Parents and teachers

can use it to concentrate not only on the current age and skill level of the student, but also to refer to past or future developmental issues. It is written in the

voice of the most important person within the process -

***the individual who is receiving services!***



**How I  
Learn to  
Know  
Myself**

***Birth through Age 2***

I need help to begin to see myself as separate from my parent, when I am older than one year.

Take time to enjoy being my parent.

I need ways to explore my environment.

I need to have my signs and signals recognized. Please respond to my cries and feed me or cuddle me when I need it.

I also need for you to respond to my babbling, gestures, and words. I might need other ways to communicate.

After I am one year old, depending on my level of responsiveness and delay, set limits on my behavior so that I can learn self-regulation.

Keep me healthy with well-baby visits. When I am sick, please take me to the doctor.

***Ages 3 to 5***

I want you to accept me as a child first, not just a child with a disability.

My brothers and sisters and I are all different people. Please enjoy our different interests and abilities.

Please support my cause and effect learning. Allow me to make mistakes; this is how I can learn.

I communicate in lots of different ways. Let me express my wants and needs, so that I can learn to communicate better.

Show me how to learn to get along with others by setting limits on my behavior.

Keep me healthy with well-child checkups and visits to the doctor when I am sick.

I should eat, and know about healthy nutritious foods and how my body works.

***Elementary***

I need to know that it is important for me to feel good about myself and who I am.

I need to know how to communicate to make my ideas and thoughts known with others. You may also need to help me learn when it is okay to talk, what to say to others, and with whom it is all right to speak.

I want you to know that I might not be the same as other kids my age, depending on my disability. But I will continue to grow and change and need help to understand this.

I have friends because I "talk" to others, they "listen" to me, and I "listen" to them. (I may use alternative communication.) We have shared ideas, experiences, and fun.

I know what is good (foods, sleep) and bad (drugs, smoking) for my body. When I get sick I should know it and can ask someone for help, such as a teacher or family member.

**Finding  
What I  
Would  
Like to  
Know**

Please structure where I live and other surroundings to give me opportunities to do typical activities that young children do.

Support my play, since play is how I learn. Play with me, please.

Take me out to new places so that I can learn about new things and other people in the security of your care.

Help me find an inclusive peer group (other kids my age who do not have disabilities). Help me learn who to trust and how to be safe.

Please do not make me do things faster than I can move or understand them.

Support my play, since play is how I learn. Play with me, please.

Take me out to new places. The more I see, the more I learn.

School can help me learn lots of new things. Encourage me to pay attention and do my work.

I should try different group and individual activities to find out what I enjoy doing in my free time.

I need to be responsible for my actions and what I say. If I need help with my schoolwork or someone in school, please help me to work on this, but don't do it for me.

I need to start learning about many different jobs from my family, teachers, and others.

**Planning  
for the  
Future**

Help me learn to make choices. Use a small number of things (2) so I can choose one.

Take me out to new places.

I want you to have a **vision** or **plan** for me when I get older that will support my growth and development **now**.

I want my parents to have a balance between their needs and mine.

Support my ability to make choices. Use three things to allow me to make a choice.

Find someone or a group that will support our whole family (maybe someone who has a child with a disability who can share ideas).

Please hold your vision for my future in mind to help me grow and learn.

I want my parents to continue to have a balance between their needs and mine.

I should be able to make simple decisions about things at school and at home. Help me do this until I learn to do this myself.

I may need help to become an active participant in my meetings (educational planning or person-centered planning).

I should understand about different kinds of jobs and in what ways people prepare for them.

<b><i>Middle/Junior High</i></b>	<b><i>High School</i></b>	<b><i>Adult</i></b>
<p>I need to know that it is important for me to feel good about myself and who I am.</p> <p>I need to know how to talk with others. I need friends, both with and without disabilities, who understand my feelings and share their feelings with me.</p> <p>Although I might not be the same size or know as much as some of my friends, I need you to understand and help me to grow and change.</p> <p>I need to be able to ask for accommodations for my learning abilities and physical limitations only if I need them. I need to be encouraged to do it myself.</p> <p>I know what is good (foods, sleep) and bad (drugs, smoking) for my body. When I get sick I should know it and can ask someone for help, such as a teacher or family member.</p>	<p>I need to feel good about myself and know that this is important.</p> <p>I need to ask for accommodations for my learning abilities and physical limitations only if I need them. I need to be able to have a chance to do it by myself first.</p> <p>Help me use good communication skills to interact with others by listening well and expressing myself.</p> <p>Help me use person-centered planning to work out my present and future plans with you and others with whom I choose to share them.</p> <p>I should learn to balance my various roles in my family, school, and community.</p> <p>I will know how to keep myself healthy and talk with my parent(s) and doctor about health care.</p>	<p>I should know how to feel good about myself and what I do without others telling me.</p> <p>I need to be able to understand what is happening when things change, both before and after.</p> <p>I need to know how to interact with others by listening well and expressing myself.</p> <p>I will be assertive without being aggressive.</p> <p>I need to be a friend and have friends who will take turns deciding what we talk about and what we do.</p> <p>I will know how and when to call a doctor when I need one.</p>
<p>I need to know that doing my best at school is important to get a job that I like.</p> <p>I will choose and participate in several activities I like to do with others and some I like just to do by myself in my free time.</p> <p>I should be learning how to find information about careers, the types of skills that jobs require and why these are both important.</p> <p>I need to know how to apply for a job and should start to gain experience in jobs that might interest me.</p> <p>I need to learn about new people and places, to widen my world and expectations for my life.</p>	<p>I need to know that doing my best at school is important to get a job that I like.</p> <p>I should understand how to find, use, and think about career information and decide what jobs I want to try.</p> <p>I should choose group and individual activities that I enjoy in my free time. I need to learn how to get around in my community.</p> <p>I should understand why I should work at a job that I like and one that gives me money to provide for my needs.</p> <p>I need to help decide how money is spent for my needs.</p> <p>I should know how to look for a job, keep a job, and change jobs if I want to do so.</p>	<p>I need the skills to enter and participate in education and/or training.</p> <p>I need to know that even if I am out of school now, I can still continue to learn both at my job and in the community, where I can be included at church, volunteer opportunities, and with friends.</p> <p>I should choose activities at home and/or in the community that I like to do in my free time.</p> <p>I need to know how to get, keep, and change jobs so that I can build a long-term career.</p>
<p>I should be learning to make more complex decisions about things at school and at home and take responsibility for them.</p> <p>I need to know about the different roles in life that people have and how these interrelate.</p> <p>I need to be thinking about my future by exploring interest, ideas, and dreams.</p> <p>I need to tell the people at my educational meeting about my goals and which ones are most important to me.</p>	<p>I need to continue to make decisions, with help from parents, teachers, and others in my life.</p> <p>I need to know about the different roles in life that people have and how these interrelate.</p> <p>I need to know about how to plan for my future and all the things I want to do with my life, (live, work, play . . .).</p> <p>Help me to learn how to understand long-term goals by breaking them into short-term objectives.</p> <p>I should know how to lead my planning meetings and see that my dream for the future guides the planning of goals and objectives.</p>	<p>I should be making most of my own decisions related to my life and take responsibility for the outcomes.</p> <p>I need to know how my job affects my individual and family life.</p> <p>I need to know the skills I have to live as independently as I want to do and how to find the help when I need it.</p> <p>If I use a team to help support me, I should lead that team, be able to share my vision, life plan, goals and be good at identifying objectives.</p>

# *A Little Bit about Transitions*

**Transition is an on-going process, not a single event or a meeting.** With timely, thorough planning, the student can move seamlessly from one environment or stage of life to the next.

**Visions are necessary to obtain what is wanted and needed from the new and future environments.**

A vision is a mental picture showing the student's life in future environments. The child's parents and other members of the support network can help the child create and express his/her vision for the future.

**Visit the new environment.** Explore options and advocate for more opportunities.

**Planning for transitions takes more time as the student gets older and moves to more complex environments.** For transitions between early childhood services and school-based services, planning should start six months to a year before moving to the next level. For transitions from school services to adult life, planning should begin by age 14 and continue until the student exits school. Applications for adult services should occur at least one year before services are needed unless waiting lists require earlier applications.

**Student participation in the development of his/her own IEP is important.** The support network, knowing the child's strengths and interests, should help the student be an active member of the planning team.

**Parents need to know about the educational rights of their child and how to best plan for transitions.** Parents are encouraged to attend at least one meeting on educational rights and transitions services offered by local advocacy groups.

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## *Dictionary of Terms*

**Accommodation** – a modification, adjustment or additional device that aids a person with a disability to learn or accomplish an activity.

**Advocacy Groups** – a group of people who work together concerning an issue or common concern.

**Alternative Communication** – any method of communication used other than verbal language such as picture boards, computers, sign language, etc.

**Assistive technology** – any piece of equipment or device that can help a person with a disability do what he or she wants to do.

**Functional Education** – Education that focuses on the skills needed for daily living. Training may include self-care such as toileting and feeding, cooking, using public transportation, handling money and finding and keeping a job.

**ICC – Infant-Toddler Coordinating Council** – an agency that evaluates and provides services for children from birth through age 2 years and their families.

**IDEA – The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** – The federal law requiring schools to offer educational services to all children with disabilities from birth through age 21. The child, parents and other members of the support network write the plan.

**IEP – Individualized Education Plan** - An individualized plan of instruction describing the educational needs of a child with a disability and how and where those needs will be met.

**IFSP – Individualized Family Service Plan** - A written plan for young child with disabilities that describes the unique needs of that child and family and how those needs will be met. The child's parents and members of an interdisciplinary team chosen for their expertise in the child's areas of need write the plan.

**Person-Centered Plan** – A plan based on a person with a disability individual strengths and needs to aid to reach his or her life goals

**Planning Team** – a collaborative group of educators, parents, and other members of a support network who join with a person with a disability to develop a plan to meet that person's goals.

**Related Services** – Special services offered by the school to support the student's special educational success. Some of these supports are physical or occupational therapy, speech-language therapy, social work, and transportation.

**Service Coordinator/Case manager** – A professional who aids individuals and families in accessing community services, setting and facilitating meetings, and coordinating the educational and community services received by the child or family to meet their needs.

**Self-Determination** – Self-determination involves making choices and decisions, problem solving, goal setting and self-advocacy for individuals with disabilities. Education services should encourage abilities and opportunities for self-determination.

**Self-Regulation** – the ability to control one's own behavior and activities

**Supported Work Experience** – A paid or unpaid work experience for a person with a disability where that worker receives on-the-job support as needed for that worker to be successful.

**Transition council** – An interagency team of parents, students and professionals who work together to improve the movement of students with disabilities from high school into adult life.

**Transition Facilitator/ Transition Specialist** – A person who aids educators, students and families in identifying educational issues and accessing community supports needed for a student with a disability to make a successful move into or out of the educational system.

**Support Network** – a group of people in each person's life: relatives, friends, coworkers, professionals and others, who help that person grow and achieve.

**Transition Plan** – A plan developed by a person with disabilities and his or her family, educators and other members of the support network, to help that person move from one setting to another.

**Vision** – A picture of a person's life sometime in the future. This image should reflect all aspects of the person's life, be based on his or her strengths and preferences, and express their hopes and greatest expectations. The vision should be flexible and will change as the person has new experiences and learns new skills.