Self Determination and Self-Advocacy

Students need to learn to make intentional, conscious choices based on preferences and interests. This can be done by teaching and creating opportunities for making choices, setting goals and creating a plan to achieve the goal.

Skill	Teaching Strategy
Make intentional, conscious choices based on interest and preferences. Example: Student has birthday money and needs to evaluate and choose how to spend it.	• Provide opportunities to explore different activities to develop interests • Create opportunities to make choices • Participate in group decision making (ARD meetings, person-centered planning meetings, family decision making)
Self-Initiation: Take action to achieve a goal Example: Student wants to try out for the basketball team,	• Support participation in community activities including volunteering (place of worship, public library, sports events, scouting, etc.) • Discuss and explore job interests, hobbies and personal abilities • Participate in review of IEP goals and objectives • Self-evaluate tasks completed at home • Save money to purchase a specific item

Students can learn skills to be self-direct and manage actions to attain goals.

Skill	Teaching Strategy
Identify different ways to solve problems when working on a goal Example: Student forgot his/her lunch and needs to come up with a solution without being told what to do.	• Teach how to consider benefits and costs associated with choice making • Encourage student to recognize that they have a challenge and support in solution finding • Create opportunities to experience problems and solution finding in natural and structured settings
Create specific actions to attain goals and respond to challenges and opportunities Example: Student wants to get into a college and does not presently have the grades to be accepted	• Establish opportunities for student to set short term achievable goals at home and school • Allow student to make mistakes and help him/her self-discover the lesson learned from mistake • Teach language that can be used to advocate for personal rights • Provide opportunities for leadership roles

Students can recognize their own abilities and recognize that they may need support to achieve the goals

Skill	Teaching Strategy
Help student become aware of their disability and recognize supports necessary to achieve their goals Example: Student wants to play a sport and needs to get a passing grade in Math	• Discuss the PLAAP (Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance) with the student prior to attending the ARD meeting • Attend ARD meetings and be included in development of academic and behavioral goals • Encourage student to ask for accommodations from teachers
Support student to identify supports, including specific people, that can help achieve a goal. Example: Student needs extra help studying for a test and asks for help from a fellow student to study together	• Support student in creating a support network at school and other settings • Create opportunities for student to ask for help from peers or others • Create opportunities for student to lean about available support and ask for them
Psychological empowerment means that the student believe that goals can be reached Example: Student who has never run wants to run a 5K race in 14 minutes. First break the goal down to run a 3 K in 14 minutes.	• Help student break down large goals into short term achievable goals so that success can be experienced • Support student to identify his/her strengths and apply them to goal setting • Help student self-evaluate progress, celebrate success, and come up with alternative plans when meeting challenges