

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Self-Determination

People who are self-determined are self-aware, set goals, make plans, and ask for support when needed.

HAVE A "CAN DO" ATTITUDE

A "can do" attitude will help you meet your goals.

GIVE YOURSELF TIME

Take time to learn and develop new skills. Practice and then practice some more!

BECOME SELF-AWARE

Know your interests, preferences, strengths and challenges.
Pay attention to how you feel and respond in different situations.

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

Know what your options are and what resources are available.

FIND YOUR VOICE

Tell people what you want and why it's important to you.

DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Develop positive relationships with others and turn to them for support when needed.

WORK WITH OTHERS

Work with others to come up with solutions to your problems.

LISTEN FOR UNDERSTANDING

We can come up with the best solutions for everyone when we listen for "why" someone wants something.

UNDERSTAND HOW TO MANAGE EMOTIONS & CONFLICT

Know what upsets you, identify strategies to help you manage your emotions and conflict.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND WHAT'S IN YOUR PLAN

Students with disabilities: Learn about your rights and what's in your plan.



KEYS TO SUCCESS

Finding Your Voice

Telling your story and standing up for yourself are keys to becoming self-determined.

IDENTIFY YOUR INTERESTS, STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, & PREFERENCES

Pay attention to how you spend your time, how you like to do things, what you're good at, and what is difficult for you.

Have new experiences. Pay attention to how you feel during the activity. Ask yourself, "What did I like?" and "What would I change?"

Talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor about options and your views. Ask them for their observations.

Take a survey to identify your interests.

SET SMART GOALS

Goals should be:

- Specific (it says exactly what is going to happen)
- Measurable (you'll know when you've reached your goal)
- Achievable (it's possible for you to reach your goal)
- Relevant (it's important to you)
- Timely (there is a date that you will reach your goal)

CREATE A PROFILE OF YOURSELF TO HELP TELL YOUR STORY

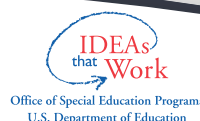
Keep them brief and include your interests, strengths, and goals. Preferences and needs may also be included, depending on the situation.

PRACTICE TELLING YOUR STORY TO A TRUSTED ADULT OR FRIEND

Practicing helps reduce anxiety about sharing your story. You can take slow, deep breaths, stand in a power pose, or picture yourself sharing your story with others.

CREATE ASSERTIVE MESSAGES

Share your feelings and opinions honestly and directly. Ask respectfully for what you need.



KEYS TO SUCCESS

Listening For Understanding

Listening for understanding is important for successful relationships and self-determination.

PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT IS SAID

When you are trying to listen to someone, don't do something else.
You might not get the entire message.

STAY OPEN-MINDED

Set aside your personal beliefs and opinions while the other person is talking.

UNDERSTAND THE MESSAGE BEING SENT

Pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal messages.
Think about whether the speaker's message makes sense.

LISTEN CAREFULLY FOR THE WHY

When someone tells you something, think about why it's important to that person.

DON'T INTERRUPT – WAIT A LITTLE BIT BEFORE RESPONDING

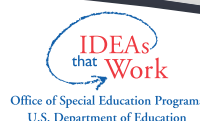
Tell people what you want and why it's important to you.

SHOW THE SPEAKER YOU CARE & ARE ENGAGED IN THE CONVERSATION

Use non-verbal messages like nodding your head and maintaining appropriate eye contact.
Be interested and curious. Ask open-ended questions.

REPEAT BACK THE MESSAGE AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT

When you repeat back the content, emotions, and meaning of the speaker's message, it shows you were listening. It will also give the speaker a chance to clarify any misunderstandings you may have.



KEYS TO SUCCESS

Managing Emotions and Conflict

Managing emotions and conflict are key to self-determination.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Take care of yourself. Get plenty of sleep and exercise. Give yourself a break when needed.

IDENTIFY WHAT TRIGGERS AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE IN YOU

Know your triggers and plan for them.

USE STRATEGIES THAT WORK BEST FOR YOU AND THE SITUATION

Learn strategies to manage your emotions. Try strategies you think will work for you. Adjust your strategy the next time, if needed.

DON'T CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION IF YOU ARE REALLY ANGRY

If emotions become intense, take a break. It's hard to be open-minded and listen when you're upset.

WHEN OTHERS EXPERIENCE STRONG EMOTIONS, SHOW EMPATHY

Think about how the other person might be experiencing the situation. Ask if they would like to talk about it and be prepared to listen. Remember, they might need some time before they are ready.

PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOU RESPOND TO CONFLICTS

Do you always respond the same way? Are you satisfied with how things turn out? If not, how could you respond differently in the future?

LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The best approach to managing conflict often depends on the people involved, the situation and what is most important to you.

ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS TO FIGURE OUT WHAT APPROACH TO USE

- "Have I been in a similar conflict before?" • "How did I manage it?" • "Was I satisfied with how things turned out?" • "What did not work?" • "What outcome do I want?"
- "What other ways can I respond?" • "What did I learn?"



KEYS TO SUCCESS

Collaborative Problem Solving

Being able to solve problems is key to becoming self-determined and reaching your goals.



CHECK YOUR EMOTIONS & FRAME OF MIND

Make sure you are calm and have an open mind before you problem solve.

DETERMINE IF YOU CAN SOLVE THIS PROBLEM ON YOUR OWN

Ask for help if you need information or support from others.

UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

Share your thoughts about the problem with others. Listen to their thoughts.

BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Write down all the ideas. Can you build off of some of these ideas or combine them?

COLLECT & ORGANIZE INFORMATION

Select the top 3-5 solutions. Create a list of weaknesses and strengths for each one.

EVALUATE SOLUTIONS

Consider each option. Listen for understanding and focus on why people want something.

TEST THE SOLUTION

See how the solution works for you. If it doesn't work, you may want to do something a little differently or try a completely different solution and see how that works.



Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Educational Planning Meetings

Educational planning meetings are great opportunities for you to practice self-determination skills and have greater say in your life.

ASK FOR AN EDUCATIONAL MEETING

When you need to talk to your teacher, counselor, or another adult about something, ask for a meeting.

BEFORE THE MEETING

PREPARE FOR ANY MEETING BY KNOWING THE 5 Ws:

- **Why** you are meeting and how the meeting will benefit you
- **Who** will be there
- **When** the meeting will happen
- **What** you will say and do
- **Where** the meeting will happen and how to get there

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS & WHAT'S IN YOUR PLAN

Students with disabilities: Learn about your rights and what's in your plan.

REVIEW YOUR PLAN

Students with disabilities: Review your current plan before your next IEP or 504 meeting.

TALK TO YOUR SUPPORT PERSON ABOUT HOW TO PARTICIPATE

This person can help you put your plan into action during the meeting. For example, she could signal to you when it's a good time to share your thoughts and ideas.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU WILL SAY

You may want to practice in front of a trusted adult, such as a parent or teacher. They can give you feedback and support you during the meeting.

ORGANIZE AND BRING ANY MATERIALS YOU NEED

If you have prepared notes, a profile, PowerPoint, or other materials make sure they are organized and easy for you to use during the meeting.

DURING THE MEETING

LISTEN FOR UNDERSTANDING

Be open to other thoughts and ideas. Maintain focus on what is being said. Pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal messages. Listen for what is behind what is being said. Remember, everyone is there because they want to see you succeed.

WAIT FOR A PAUSE IN CONVERSATION TO SAY SOMETHING

ASK FOR A BREAK OR ASK TO LEAVE IF YOU NEED TO

