



Promoting My Child's Independence and Self-Determination

Your child's role in education, as in life, will continue to evolve as maturity and growth occur. Self-determination is an important attribute for all people to possess. It is developed by acquiring a set of skills that help a person understand individual Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs (SPIN).

Eventually, all children with Individualized Education Plan (IEPs) will be expected to provide input for the development of the IEP and attend IEP meetings. There is an important phrase you might have heard which says, "Nothing about me without me." This means that when the person with a disability is being discussed and plans are being made, that individual has the right to be at the table.

They are valued members of the IEP Team and there are strategies parents can use to assist them in preparing for this role. These include: encouraging dialogue and identification of strengths, preferences, interests, and needs; discussing supports or accommodations that are required in the learning process; and encouraging communication to express their goals and things that are important to them.

Being self-determined will help your child build self-advocacy skills.

- Your child can participate in the IEP process long before reaching the age for secondary transition.
- Your child can invite people to attend the IEP meeting.
- There are various methods for your child to participate in the IEP meeting. You can find several such resources at the [I'm Determined](#) website.

Self-determined people:

Set goals

Develop and evaluate plans to meet goals

Self-regulate

Problem-solve

Advocate for themselves

Make choices and decisions according their SPIN

Believe in themselves as capable people

Believe they can take control of their lives

Age of Majority

Age of Majority is reached when your child turns 18 and will be able to make educational decisions without you.

For example, your child would be able to grant consent for the IEP. Allowing choice-making early and encouraging participation in the IEP process will aid in the preparation for this important milestone. The IEP Team is required to inform you of this at least one year before your child reaches age 18. The [Transfer of Rights for Students with Disabilities Upon Reaching the Age of Majority in Virginia](#) document provides valuable information to help you understand this process.