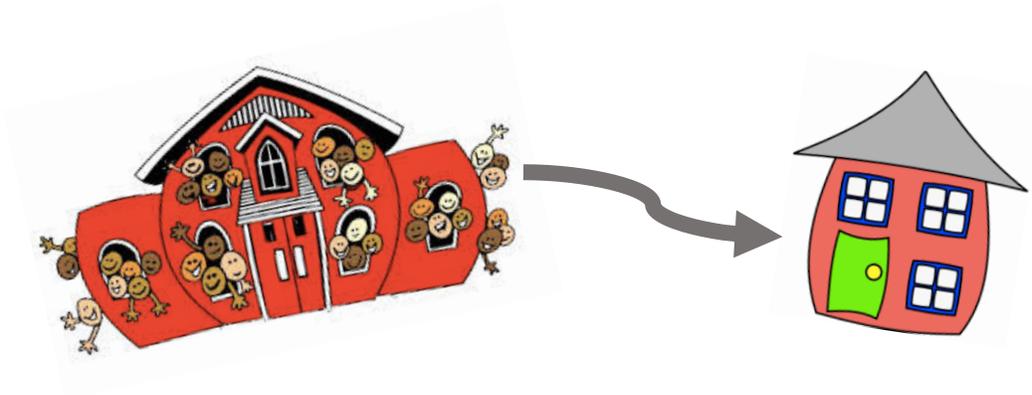


Self-Determination: Not Just a School Day Skill



Lori Y. Peterson, Ph.D.
University of Northern Colorado
lori.peterson@unco.edu

Courage to Risk 2019
Colorado Springs, CO
YOUR Goal Attainment

1. Describe a **long-term** goal **you** accomplished even though there were challenges along the way that you had to overcome. Explain the challenge.

Goal: _____

Challenge: _____

2. Describe your **skills** that helped you the **overcome** the **challenge** in #1.

3. Describe a **daily** or **short-term** goal **you** accomplished even though you faced challenges. Explain the challenge.

Goal: _____

Challenge: _____

4. Describe your **skills** that helped you the **overcome** the **challenge** in #3.

Peterson, L. Y. 2018

Your Child/Student and Goal Attainment

STEP ONE: Think about what you wrote, on the previous page, about the skills you used to overcome your challenges. (See page 3 question #2 and #4.)

STEP TWO: Answer the following questions with Yes, No, or Maybe

1. Does your child/student have some of the same skills you used in overcoming your challenges?

Yes

Maybe

No

2. Do you think your child/student will need these skills to be successful in adulthood?

Yes

Maybe

No

3. Can your child/student learn these skills by setting a goal, creating a plan to attain the goal, and evaluating progress toward the goal?

Yes

Maybe

No

Notes: _____

Strategies	Notes
1. Find the Balance between Protection and Independence	
2. Help children learn what they say or do is important and can have an influence on others.	
3. Promote self-worth and self-confidence.	
4. Address questions from your child about his/her individual characteristics.	
5. Recognize the process of working towards goals; don't just emphasize the outcomes.	
6. Provide opportunities for your child to realize that everyone is unique.	
7. Set realistic but ambitious expectations for your child.	

8. Allow your child to take responsibility for his/her own actions; successes and failures.	
9. Take every opportunity to allow your child to make choices.	
10. Provide Honest, Positive Feedback.	
11. Some Additional Strategies.	

Adapted from Wehmeyer, M. L., & Field, S. L. (2007). *Self-determination instructional and assessment strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

TAKE NOTE!

Children's Books for Self-Determination

Children's literature provides an excellent vehicle to illustrate self-determination concepts. Below is a listing of some children's books that can be used to supplement self-determination instruction. This list was generated by teachers who participated in the Ingham Intermediate School District (Mason, MI) Self-Determination Learning Community. Informal teachers are provided throughout the listings.

Where Do Balloon Go? An Uplifting Mystery by Jamie Lee Curtis

This book ponders all of the places balloons might go when they float up to the sky. It is beautifully illustrated. It is good for supporting expansive thinking, or thinking outside the box. This book especially supports dream and creativity aspects of self-determination.

I Am – I Am a Dancer by Eleanor Schick

This book jackets states, "Celebrated here are the limitless possibilities of childhood and children's imaginations, especially the wonderful sense of being part of it all. The illustrations are simple, yet warm and engaging." This book supports training and creativity components of self-determination.

I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem by Jamie Lee Curtis and Laura Connell

This book focuses on liking ourselves in many different types of situations. It has great illustrations that are both colorful and playful. It focuses on accepting and valuing yourself come concept of self-determination.

Alice and Greta by Stevens J. Simmons

Alice is a good witch. Greta is a not-so-good witch. Through humor and a lighthearted approach, this book promotes the "brewmerang principle," which is defined as "Whatever you chant, whatever you brew, sooner or later comes back to you." This book supports discussion of anticipating potential results of actions, an important competency for self-determination.

Bunny Cakes by Rosemary Wells

In this story, a bunny wants to make an earthworm cake decorated with "red-hot marshmallow squirts." He is thwarted at every step he takes. However, he finally reaches his goal. This book provides an opportunity to discuss elements of self-determination including persistence and using creativity to overcome barriers.

A Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon

This book tells the story of the girl who is always trying to fit in and be like everyone else. She has some unwelcome results and learns that she likes being herself. This book provides an excellent jumping-off point to discuss issues of self-awareness and accepting and believing in yourself.

Stephanie's Ponytail by Robert Munsch

Stephanie wears a ponytail to school for the first time and she is greeted with chants of "ugly, ugly, very ugly." Stephanie replies, "It's my ponytail and I like it that way!" The next day everyone comes to school with a ponytail. Stephanie is upset because now everyone is copying

her. A great story is told, as Stephanie tries to find a variety of ways to be original. Self-determination components addressed include accept and value yourself, creativity, and experience outcomes and learn.

The Coat of Many Colors by Dolly Parton

This book is based on the Dolly Parton song of the same name. It tells the story of how Dolly's mother made a coat for her when she was young. Her mother sewed the coat from scraps of material, because she did not have money to buy a coat. Dolly thought the coat was beautiful, but her peers at school laughed at the coat. She tells a wonderful story about defining yourself, rather than letting others define you. Self-determination components addressed include accept and value yourself and develop and nurture positive relationships.

The City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau

Lina and Doon live in the City of Ember, which exists in eternal darkness. This city is in danger of losing even all of their artificial light. The book tells the story of Lina and Doon as they rise to the challenge of saving the city. This is a real page-turner. Self-determination components addressed include know your strengths, weaknesses, needs, and preferences; develop and nurture positive relationships; take risks and anticipate potential consequences; creativity; realize success; compare performance to expected performance; and compare outcome to expected outcome. Age recommendations are not provided, but it appears to be geared toward upper elementary and middle school.

Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees

This is an adorable story with fabulous illustrations. Gerald the giraffe loves to dance. But his legs are too skinny and his neck is too long, and so forth. The cricket believes in Gerald and tells him, "Everything makes music if you want it to." So, Gerald starts swaying to his own sweet tune. This story provides an opportunity to discuss individual strengths and differences and believing in yourself.

Salt in His Shoes by Michael Jordan, and ***In Pursuit of a Dream*** by Deloris Jordan and Roslyn M. Jordan

Michael sets goals, works hard, and is dedicated to become a good basketball player. With a little encouragement from his family and some "salt in his shoes," he does just that! This book encourages students to believe in themselves and follow their dreams. It also highlights the importance of supportive relationships.

Hooray for you! A Celebration of "You-ness" by Marianne Richmond

This story is a celebration of "You-ness" - the grand sum of body, mind, and heart that makes every person truly unique. It focuses on honoring our own individuality.

It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parks

Illustrations and brief text describe all kinds of differences that are "okay" such as "It's okay to be adopted" or "It's okay to need some help." It can be used as a tool you have a conversation about individual strengths and weaknesses and believing in yourself.

I Knew You Could by Craig Dorfman

This is a classic story about all the stops you make in your life. Our teachers described it as a MUST HAVE. It teaches concepts of persistence and believe in yourself.

Oh, the Places You'll Go by Dr. Seuss

This book is an excellent resource to help students dream about a variety of future possibilities and plans.

Runt by Marion Dane Bauer

This book is about a young wolf cub who is named Runt by his father. He feels isolated from the group until he finds his own gift. It provides a starting point to talk about how differences can bring diversity to “the pack” and how having faith in yourself is important.

Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko

This is a quick chapter book about a boy who moves to Alcatraz Island with his family during the 1930s. The plot revolves around Moose and his sister Natalie, who is autistic. It's a great read. Significant attention is placed on dealing with issues of disability.

From Wehmeyer, M. L., & Field, S. L. (2007). *Self-determination instructional and assessment strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

School and Family Strategies for Promoting Self-Determination

Early Childhood (Ages 2-5)

- Provide opportunities to make structured choices, such as, "Do you want to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt?" Extend choices across food, clothing, activity, and other choices.
- Provide opportunities to generate choices that are both positive and negative, such as, "We have 10 more minutes. What could we do?" and "You spilled your milk. What could you do to clean it up?"
- Provide formative and constructive feedback on the consequences of choices made in the recent past, such as, "When you pushed hard on the pencil it broke. What might you want to do the next time?" and "When you used an angry voice, I didn't do what you wanted. What could you do differently?"
- Provide opportunities for planning activities that are pending, such as, "You need to choose a dress to wear to the wedding," or "Decide what kind of sandwich you want to take for lunch tomorrow."
- Provide opportunities to self-evaluate task performance by comparing their work to a model. Point out what they've done that's like the model, such as, "Look, you used nice colors to, just like this one," and "Do you see that you both drew the man from the side?"
- Ask directive questions so that the child compares his or her performance to a model, such as, "Are all of your toys in the basket, to?" or "I'll know you're ready for the story when you are sitting on your mat with your legs crossed, your hands on your knees, and your eyes on me."

Early Elementary (Ages 6-8)

- Provide opportunities to choose from among several different strategies for a task, such as, "Will you remember your spelling words better if you write them out, say them to yourself, or test yourself?" or "What is the easiest way for you to figure out what this word means?"
- Ask children to reconsider choices they've made in the recent past, in light of those choices' subsequent consequences, such as, "This morning you decided to spend your lunch money on the comic. Now it's lunch time and you're hungry. What decision do you wish you'd made?" or "I remember when you decided to leave your coat in your locker. What happened because you made that decision?"
- Encourage children to "think aloud" with you, saying the steps that they are taking to complete a task or solve a problem, such as, "Tell me what you're thinking in your head while you try to figure out what the word means," or "You've lost your house key. What are you thinking to yourself while you decide what to do?"
- Provide opportunities for students to talk about how they learn, such as, "I sit easier for you to tell me what you want by saying it or by writing it down?" or "Do you remember better if you study for a test all at once or a little bit on several different days?" Help students test out their answers.
- Provide opportunities for students to systematically evaluate their work, such as, "Here's a very neat paper, and here's your paper. Is your paper as neat as this one? What are the differences between this paper and yours? How are they alike?"
- Help students set simple goals for themselves and check to see whether they are reaching them, such as, "You said you want to read two books this week. How much of a book have you read so far? Let's color in your goal sheet so you can see how much you've done."

Late Elementary (Ages 9-11)

- Provide guidance in systematic analyses of decisions: writing the problem at the top of a sheet of paper, listing all possible choices, and sketching out the benefits and cost of each choice.
- Use the same systematic structure to analyze past decisions now that their consequences are evident, such as, "You were angry at Jo for teasing you, and so you punched her in the cheek. Now you have to sit out at recess for a week. What are some other things that you could have done instead? What might have happened then?"
- Provide opportunities for students to commit to personal or academic goals: writing the goal down and storing it in a safe place, revisiting the goal periodically to reflection progress toward it, listing optional steps to take toward the goal, and trying out the steps and reflecting on their success.
- Provide opportunities to systematically analyze adult perspectives, such as the point of view of the volley ball coach when a student is late to every game or the perspective of the librarian when a student returns a book that is dirty and torn. Help the student guess what the adult is thinking and feeling and what might be done as a result.
- Provide opportunities for students to evaluate task performance in affectively "safe" ways: identifying weaknesses and strengths in performance, reflecting on ways to improve performance, trying out some ways, and reevaluating performance to check for improvement. For example, "You got a lower grade than you wanted on your research paper. What steps did you take to make it a really strong paper? What steps did you leave out? What might you do now to make it even better?"

Secondary (Ages 12-18)

- Provide opportunities for students to make decisions that have important impact on their day-to-day activities, such as academic goals, careers to explore, schedules to keep, diet and sleep habits, and others.
- Make it easy for students to see the link between goals they set for themselves and the daily decisions that they make, such as, "You made a point of going to bed early last night, and now see you earned a 95 on today's quiz. Going to bed on time seems to be helping you meet your goal of higher grades this semester," or "You've set aside half of every paycheck, and now you have \$625 in the bank. It won't belong before you have enough to buy the computer you want."
- Provide guidance in breaking students' long-term goals into a number of short-term objectives. Lead students through planning activities to determine steps to take to progress toward these goals. For example, help a student break the goal of a higher math grade into smaller objectives of rechecking math homework before handing it in, practicing the math problems on nights before the test, asking questions whenever something isn't clear.
- Assist the student in realistically recognizing and accepting weaknesses in key skills. You might say, for example, "It's hard for you to do your math problems without making mistakes in your math facts. What are some parts of math that you're good at? What could you do to get around the reality that you don't remember math facts well?"
- Assist students in requesting academic and social supports from teachers. Say, for example, "You'd like Mrs. Gren to let you have some extra time to complete the weekly quiz. How will you ask her for that?" or "You think you'd do better work if your boss would let you see a notepad to jot down the orders. What can you do to ask for that?"

From Sands, D. J., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (Eds.). (1996). *Self-determination across the lifespan: Independence and choice for people with disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes

Self-Determination: Not Just a School Day Skill!

Dr. Lori Y. Peterson
University of Northern Colorado

Courage to Risk 2019
Colorado Springs, CO

Perspective...

- Think about Your Accomplishments and The Challenges You Faced
 - Long-Term Goal
 - Daily or Short-Term Goal
- Now...Think about Your Students!

Self-Determination

“A combination of *skills, knowledge*, and *beliefs* that enable a person to engage in *goal directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior*. An understanding of one’s strengths and limitations together with a *belief in oneself* as capable and effective are essential to self-determination.”
(Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998, p.2)

“... dispositional characteristic manifested as *acting as the causal agent in one’s life*. Self-determined people (i.e., causal agents) act in service to freely chosen goals. Self-determined actions function to enable a person to be the causal agent in his or her life”
Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmey, Forber-Pratt, Little, & Lopez, 2015, p. 258

Self-Determination and Outcomes

- Young adults with higher self-determination skills at the end of high school had higher rates of
 - community involvement
 - employment with benefits
 - independent living (Shogren et al., 2015)
- Student attendance at IEP meetings and self-advocacy are positively related to competitive employment (Wehman et al., 2014).
- Self-determination is a significant predictor of academic achievement in reading and math and the strongest predictor of achievement when controlling for all other factors (e.g. gender, family income, urbanicity) (Gauger, Erickson et al., 2015).

Special Educators: Preschool-Transition Program

Opening doors, creating opportunities

Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI)

SDLMI Follow-Up

Individual Observation and Coaching

Parent Self-Determination Workshop and Panel

Provide SDLMI Training for Other Special Education

Evaluation and Planning for Following Year

Self-Determination 101

What Teachers Said...

1. Knowledge of Self-Determination
2. Creating Self-Determination Opportunities
3. Strategies for Developing Student Self-Determination
4. Including Parents/Families in Creating Self-Determination Opportunities

Self-Determination Opportunities

- "I Can" prompts and language to build self-esteem and motivate task completion
- "I Am" language to develop self-awareness
- Self-regulation through affirmations to motivate and maintain positive affect
- Student developed instructional goals to drive independent work behaviors
- Exploration of career requirements to motivate skill development and self-evaluate preparedness
- Self-evaluation of goals using developmentally accessible tools
- Choice making to develop awareness of autonomous behavior
- Letters to parents during IEP meeting outlining student self-awareness of current work, statements of pride, challenges, strategies that work, personal learning, classroom community involvement

Strategies:
Self-determination.org



Strategies: Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDMI)

The form is titled "SDMI Goal Form" and includes sections for:

- Student Information:** Name, Date, and a "Student of Your Confidence" scale.
- Checklist of Skills:** A grid with 10 items and a color-coded key (Green: I can do it, Yellow: I am working on it, Red: I need more help).

1. I talk about what I am good at.	<input type="radio"/>
2. I talk about what I need to work on.	<input type="radio"/>
3. I start my projects.	<input type="radio"/>
4. I talk about my interests and likes.	<input type="radio"/>
5. I ask for help when I need it.	<input type="radio"/>
6. I set changes to reach my goal.	<input type="radio"/>
7. I use positive self-talk.	<input type="radio"/>
8. I take risks.	<input type="radio"/>
9. I show my feelings appropriately.	<input type="radio"/>
10. I understand good choices.	<input type="radio"/>
- Goal/Area to Practice:** A section for the student to write "What do you want to work on?" and "What can you do to meet the goal?"

Including Families in Creating SD Opportunities

- Families want more guidance and structure for child**
 "It was really a battle for a while. You know, the mother trying to get us to micro-manage. And the girl doesn't want to be micro-managed either...But, by the end of the school year, the mom was crying because she was so happy to see how far her daughter had come."
- Family expectation and anxiety**
 "helicoptering or snow plowing their kids, moving stuff out of the way so things are easy for them and fixing it for them."
- Family self-determination knowledge**
 "a lot of the parents, when they hear the ideas of self-determination, they think of it as a big thing and they don't even necessarily know that their kids are already doing those things, in every day interactions."

Including Parent/Families in Creating SD Opportunities

- Family responses vary**
 "It's been kind of a range of parents. We have some parents that just aren't willing to accept yet that their child needs additional support. Then we have other parents that are so open to accepting suggestions, and if we say, "Try this at home," they'll try everything in their power to try to get them to do it at home...Then they go home and do it, and then the child finally does it for them. They're just so excited because they haven't seen it."
- Window of hope**
 "You just have to teach [parents] how to do it or break it down smaller. Once they learn how to do that, and they figure out their child can do it, they get so excited. Then they want more and more."
- Potential outcome**
 "He [parent] said to me, 'I really feel like you understand my daughter and I appreciated that.' So, I'm really excited about that."

Taking It Home...

...Packing the Parent Backpack



Getting Started... Connecting with Families

- Know families preferred method of communication
 - Letters home (email and hard copy)
 - Newsletter (email and hard copy)
 - Phone calls In person meetings
 - Google classroom
 - Students share information (cue cards, practice)
 - Others?
- Prepare families to discuss sensitive topics
 - No judgement
 - Example presented as generalizations – strategies have limits
 - Focused on student success
 - Open minded
- Understand family perspective
 - Protective nature
 - Best interest of their child
 - Cultural considerations
 - May already do

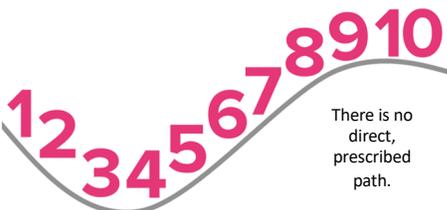
Families Promoting Self-Determination



- Family features can facilitate or impede development of self-determination.
- Family practices can support prosocial skills that influence self-determination skills.

Tumbull & Tumbull, 1996

10 Things Parents Can Do



There is no direct, prescribed path.

1. Find the Balance between Protection and Independence.



- Allow your child to explore his/her world.
- Support your child in taking risks guaranteed to result in a positive outcome.

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

What's in a Name? Helicopters and Hummingbirds

Parent Self-Determination

*I'm a Hummingbird Parent**

I love nearby, but not over my kids. I remain distant enough to let them explore and learn to solve problems. I teach them skills, mainly by example. I zoom in only when their survival is threatened. My goal for them isn't a risk-free childhood, but a resilient life.

Child Self-Determination

*http://blog-childhoodinstitute.org

2. Help children learn what they say or do is important and can have an influence on others.



- Allow your child risk taking and exploration.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and express opinions.
- Involve your child in family discussions and decision making, when appropriate.

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

3. Promote self-worth and self-confidence.



- Model your own sense of positive self-esteem.
- Show your child he/she is important by spending time with him/her.
- Involve your child in family activities and discussions.

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

Camilo is Practicing Self-Esteem and Self-Worth at an Early Age.



4. Address questions from your child about his/her strengths and weaknesses.



- Focus on your child's strengths and the challenges, find the balance.
- Stress individuality.
- Encourage your child's unique abilities.
- Help your child acknowledge/accept unavoidable limitations.

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

5. Recognize the process of working towards goals; don't just emphasize the outcomes.



- Model and encourage organization and goal setting skills.
- Make lists or hang Dry-Erase boards with daily schedule for each family member.
- Talk about the steps you each use to complete a task.
- Involve your child in steps to plan towards a family goal.

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

6. Provide opportunities for your child to realize that everyone is unique.



- Start providing opportunities as early as possible.
- Schedule opportunities for your child to interact with other children of different ages and backgrounds.
 - Day Care Centers
 - Play Groups
 - Personal Interest Activities
 - Churches
 - Playing in the Neighborhood

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

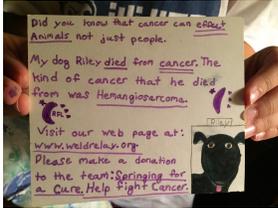
7. Set realistic but ambitious expectations for your child.



- Actively engage with your child's educational experience.
- Your child's goals should extend just beyond his/her reach.
- Make sure to not force activities that lead to frustration.
- Understand that your child's academic progress should occur at home as well as school.

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

8. Allow your child to take responsibility for his/her own actions; successes and failures.



- Provide valid reasons for doing things that link your child's actions to the outcomes.
- Child gets a Community Service award at school.
- Child response: "Oh, everyone got awards."
- Parent response: "No, you worked hard raising money for Relay for Life. That is a great way to provided community service and you were recognized for your work."

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

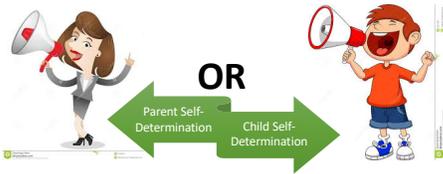
9. Take every opportunity to allow your child to make choices.



- Where possible and appropriate make choice opportunities meaningful to your child.
 - Clothing choices.
 - Dinner choices.
 - Vacation choices.
- When offering choices make sure your child's decision is honored.

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

CheerLEADing: Whose got the Megaphone?



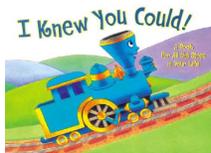
10. Provide Honest, Positive Feedback.



- Focus on the behavior or task that needs changing in order to de-emphasize your child's feeling of failure.
- Support your child learning from his/her mistakes by structuring the discussion on the behavior so your child does not believe the problem is within him/her – this does not mean shirking responsibility.

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

11. Some Additional Strategies



- Share Stories of Self-Determination
 - Personal
 - Published – Resources in Handout
- Capitalize on Teachable Moments
 - Observe your child throughout the day for opportunities to learn through real experiences

Wehmeyer & Field, 2007

Recommended Reading...





I MAY NOT BE PERFECT BUT PARTS
OF ME ARE PRETTY AWESOME.

Contact Information...

- Lori Y. Peterson, Ph.D.
University of Northern Colorado
lori.peterson@unco.edu

