



Self-Advocacy & Self-Determination

By Raquel Castaneda

We are constantly told that our loved ones with disabilities need to have self-determination and self-advocacy skills. But what does that really mean?

Self-determination and self-advocacy are skills that go hand in hand but at times the line of distinction can get blurry. Both share a similar interest, independence!

Self-advocacy is an important skill that your loved one with a disability can obtain. Without it, they can often be overlooked, used, or even abused. But what is it? Self-advocacy is the ability to speak up for yourself and others, knowing your rights, wants and needs, identifying your personal goals and the steps to get there, and being able to communicate them.

Self-determination is the process by which a person can control their own life. This would include being able to go to the doctor on their own, going grocery shopping, or living independently. This skill is equally important as self-advocacy.

Developing these skills helps lead individuals with disabilities onto the road of independence. It is our duty to help them develop these skills in anyway possible. We can do this by encouraging them to do their own grocery list or by letting them speak at their own appointments. Another great way to practice this would be through role

play at home. It can be a slow process but it is worth it in order to have our loved ones meet their full potential.

For tips and information on Self-Advocacy visit:

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/priority-selfadvocacy/#youth>

For tips and information on Self-Determination visit:

<http://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/independent-community-living/self-determination.asp>



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