Children are taught to set problems that are relevant, and are suitable for their intellectual levels. Teaching problem-solving skills allows children to become more active learners who are in control of their behavior. If children have control over their lives, they will naturally get your child's attention and learn how to solve problems. When teaching problem-solving skills, ask your child to solve problems on his/her own, but only if you offer support. I do, We do, You do approach. Show the child, do with the child, and then ask the child how he/she will do. Children told you he is having a problem solving a problem in a specific situation and/or you have his do it. Making choices can affect children's self-esteem. A problem-solving plan helps your child to see money for a concert so she would like to attend. Discuss how children learn and improve their skills which she may want to try and then set a savings schedule to reach the goal.
Raising the Self-Determined Child

Choice Making

Every parent wants their child to have a happy, productive life. They hope their child will be part of a community, have friends, find meaningful employment, live as independently as possible, and enjoy health and well being. The self-determination skills children develop early in life can provide a strong foundation for success in adulthood. As we learn any new skill, it takes time and practice. For this reason, parents need to think about ways to promote choice making, decision making, goal setting, and problem solving throughout the early, middle, and teen years.

As a parent, you may wonder how to help your child learn to control his/her life and future while at the same time keeping him/her safe from harm. This may be especially true if your child has a disability. Taking risks is often part of taking steps toward independence and self determination. Some parents do not want their children to take any risks and so they limit their child’s experiences to only “safe” ones. The challenge is to manage risk, not avoid it. Risk increases when skill, experience and/or support are limited.

Likewise, increased your child’s skill, experience and/or supports can reduce the risk.

Providing many opportunities for your child to make meaningful decisions that impact his/her daily life is important. Making meaningful decisions starts with careful consideration of the choices that are available. Offering a wide range of choices in matters big and small can help your child discover his/her preferences, interests, and learning styles. This knowledge can help your child build a fulfilling life that reflects his/her own dreams.

Tips for Parents of Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- Offer a wide range of choices in matters big and small
- Help your child discover his/her preferences, interests, strengths and learning styles.

Suggested Resources

- The National Gateway to Self Determination Project, provides many tips, tools, and videos related to promoting self determination for children with disabilities. It is available online from the Beach Center website at http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/
- Offers a wide range of choices in matters big and small. This book provides a guide for problem solving and goal setting for parents to use with their children.
- Choice Making Decision Making Goal Setting Problem Solving

Decision Making

- Decision Making
- Goal Setting
- Problem Solving

Reference


Fostering Self Determination Among Children with Disabilities—ideas from Parents, Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison

This guide provides a menu of ideas developed by parents for parents to promote self determination for children with disabilities. It is available online from the Waisman Center website at http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/pdf/. Self Determination and Choice.

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