

The Five Principles of Self-Determination

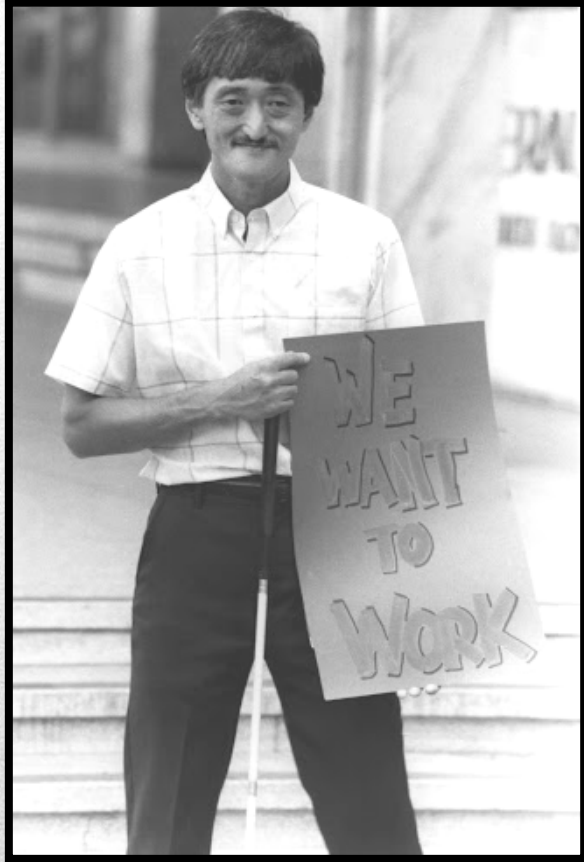
Self-Determination: An individual's right to make choices about their own lives, to have the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else, and to speak and advocate for themselves.



The ability to have the freedom to develop a personal life plan based on your dreams and lifestyle.

- Your 8 year old chooses between several types of food options (particularly at a restaurant!), ways to spend his/her free time, or friends with whom he/she prefers to spend time.
- Your 13 year old is included in the decision-making process of scheduling elective classes at junior high, or extracurricular activities in which to become involved.
- Your 17 year old is included in the decision-making process regarding his/her transition from high school to the adult world.

Freedom



Support

To organize resources in ways that are life enhancing and meaningful to you. Supports include personnel, both formal and informal, and resources available in your community.

Many people with disabilities may need support from others to do the things that are important to them. Allowing the individual to have as much control as possible over who provides the support and how they provide it is crucial to self-determination.

The ability to have authority to control the resources available for your supports. This includes authority to decide what, who, when, where and how much.

- There are many ways to assist a person with a disability to manage their own finances, or participate in the management of their money.

Authority

dignity+respect
= Inclusion



You have a responsibility to use resources wisely, and to contribute back to your community in meaningful ways through your presence, efforts and your gifts.

- With freedom and authority comes responsibility. Don't let your child's disability stand in the way of taking responsibility in ways that make sense for them.
- Disability should never be an excuse for lack of accountability.

Responsibility

Individuals should play an important leadership role in a newly-designed system.

- Proof of your importance, the role you play in the lives of others.
- When we realize that we matter, our lives take on a whole new meaning and significance.



Confirmation

Self-determination will look different for every individual. Self-determination is an unending destination, with many baby steps in the journey.

Self-determination begins at birth and, with support and opportunity, can carry your child to lead a more self-determined life as an adult with a disability.





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