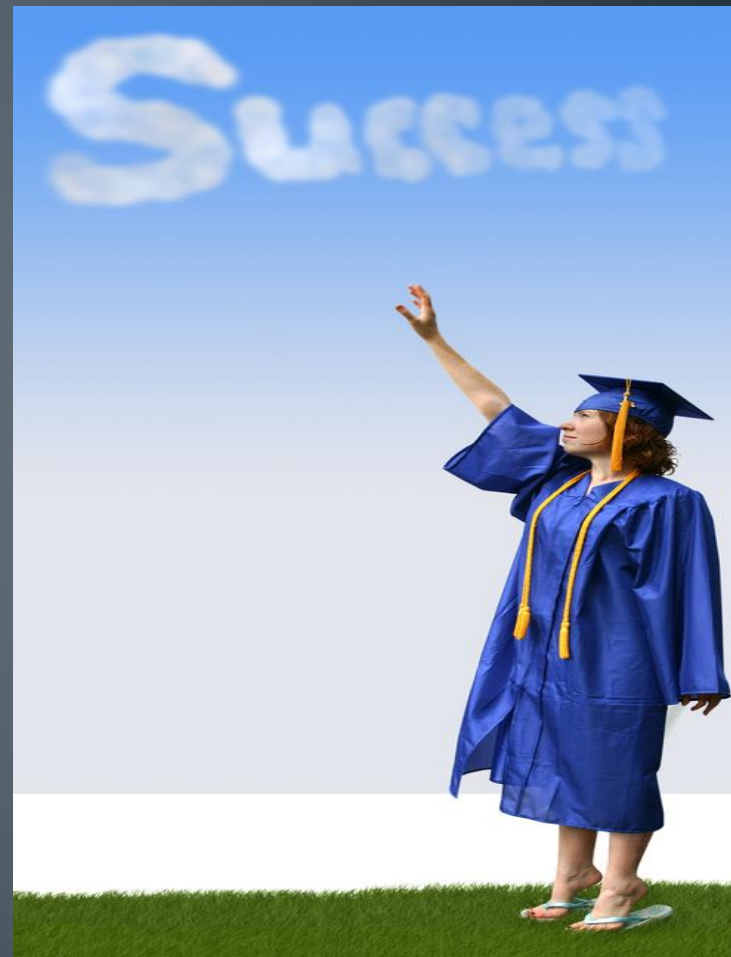


Helping Students Find their Voice: Self- Advocacy Strategies

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Today's Objectives

- Identify strategies for developing Disability Awareness
- Explore ways to cultivate students talents and interests.
- Discuss effective communication strategies that promote self-advocacy.
- Develop the skills necessary to identify resources and strategies to teach independent living skills



Learning to be Self-Aware

- Self-Advocacy:
Empowering students to recognize their abilities and ask for assistance when needed without using their limitations as a crutch.



Teaching Disability Awareness and Self Advocacy: Where do we Start?

- Parental Empowerment: High Expectations from Parents=High Expectations from students!
- Familiarize yourself with tools and resources to set those high expectations
Talk to your children early about their disability.
- Examples of Empowerment:
 - Knowledge of IEP/504 rights
 - Explore future opportunities available to students
Engage your children on the topic of “Disability Awareness” and Self-Advocacy

Parental Empowerment: Developing High Expectations for Students

Future Opportunities

- Think College:
- [http://www.thinkcollege.net/
/component/programsdata
base/search?state=MD](http://www.thinkcollege.net/component/programsdatabase/search?state=MD)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Disability Services offices at colleges and Universities

Tips for Developing Disability Awareness and Advocacy

- Stay Positive: Focus on Strengths and Abilities
- Give your child household responsibilities.
- Encourage Socialization (going out to eat, to a movie, ect.)

Student Empowerment: Disability Awareness

- Begin discussing the child's Disability Early
- Focus on the child's strengths
- Look for Success Stories of individuals with disability
- Persurvience not Pity



Cultivating a Student's Talents and Interests

- Encourage involvement in the community (Church groups, sports teams, after-school activities)
- Encourage “Start-Finish” policy
- Watch for developing strengths and interests from an early age.
- Involve the student in their IEP and Transition Plan
- Pay close attention to the courses that the student is taking at school.
- NSTTAC Age Appropriate Assessment Tool-Kit
- <http://www.nsttac.org/content/age-appropriate-transition-assessment-toolkit-3rd-edition>



Effective Self-Advocacy: Communication is Key!

Effective Communication Skills:

- Avoid attacking statements (“you always/never”)
- Teach good posture, body language and facial expressions
- There is a difference between being a good advocate vs. being adversarial

Teaching Strategies

- Parents and students create separate lists of goals for the students/Then discuss
- Involve your student in any planning meetings that you may have to prepare for the transition IEP meeting.
- Role play or use social stories to prepare the student for IEP/504 meetings and other situations that may involve advocacy.

Developing Independent Living Skills

- Identify barriers to independent living and identify possible solutions and/or ask questions to ensure it is addressed in the IEP.
- Ask student what he/she wants out of life.
- Having a job is important, but that's not everything!



Independent Living Skill Resources

- Independent Living Skills

Overview:

- http://www.nsttac.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/pdf/life_skills_executive_summary.pdf

- “Plan a Perfect Life”
budgeting tool

- <http://www.tnstep.org/resources/transitionServices.aspx>

- Think College Island:

- <http://www.thinkcollege.net/think-college-island>

Questions:



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