

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Self-Determination

Wehmeyer, M.L. (2003). Making their own way: The perspectives of three young people with disabilities. In M. Sadowski (Ed.), *Adolescents at School: Perspectives on Youth, Identity, and Education* (pp. 140-144). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

BOTTOM LINE

Three teenagers with different disabilities write about how they have learned to develop a positive sense of self and become ambitious, effective, self-determining individuals.

Beach Center on Disability

Making a Sustainable Difference in Quality of Life



TIPS

- Support adolescents with disabilities who want to make choices about coursework, extracurricular activities, college, and more.
- In order for adolescents to be independent, they must not allow their disability to take control.
- Adolescents with disabilities need appropriate help and a chance to succeed and not over-protection.

METHOD

- Three teenagers with different disabilities – Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and a learning disability – offer first-person accounts of what it’s like to be an adolescent with a disability.
- Included is a poem as well as an address given by one of the students at the signing ceremony for the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

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RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Pauley, C.A. (1998). The view from the student’s side of the table. In M.L. Wehmeyer & D.J. Sands (Eds.), *Making it happen: Student involvement in educational planning, decision-making, and instruction* (pp.123-128). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Allen, J. (1998). A conversation with cerebral palsy. In L.E. Powers, G.H. Singer, & J. Sowers (Eds.), *On the road to autonomy: Promoting self-competence in children and youth with disabilities* (pp. 93-95). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

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