# Research Highlights

**Topic:** Self-Determination


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**BOTTOM LINE**

Eighty former students with cognitive disabilities participated in a follow-up study that measured their adult outcomes one year after graduation from high school. Analysis of the data revealed that self-determined students had a greater likelihood of more positive adult outcomes, such as being employed at a higher rate and earning more than peers who are not self-determined. Transition services should promote self-determination using student-directed planning, decision making, and program development to promote choice and decision-making for life as an adult.

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**TIPS**

- Support students to have early and frequent practice in making decisions and solving problems. Be sure to provide feedback that will help them improve their skills in these areas.

- Students will benefit from setting short and long-term goals, observing and measuring their own progress, and evaluating their progress. Begin with short-term goals that are easily obtained and measured until the student is more comfortable with the process.

- Include self-determination goals and skills in educational and transition planning, including the assessment of resources, communication skills, and goal and problem setting.
**Tip's**

- Self-Determined students with cognitive disabilities showed more success in adult outcomes, specifically employment, than did adults with fewer self-determination skills.

- Component elements for the acquisition of self-determination were identified. These skills were linked to instructional practices and educational and transition planning.

**Method**

- Eighty students with cognitive disabilities, ages 17 to 22, who would be leaving school at the completion of the 1994-1995 school year, answered questions in another study about self-determination while in school.

- One year later these former students responded to a follow-up survey. The survey given in this study gathered information about adult outcomes such as employment and transportation.

- Information on students’ age, IQ, and other demographic information was obtained and used in the analyses of the data.

**Related Publications**


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