

Instruction in Self-Advocacy Progression

Self-Advocacy Awareness

Learning ABOUT oneself

Build self-awareness, including interests, skills, accommodations, impact of disability, and goals. Ensure student can express needs and wants, and recognizes they have choices.

Sample Student Outcome

Student is aware of their disability, how it impacts them and why they have accommodations.

Experiences might include:

- Present to IEP team about interests and goals
- Discovery/Self-Discovery
- Career interest inventories
- Class on identifying support needs
- Teacher teaches and models vocabulary to assist in describing individual strengths and needs
- Create portfolio to capture interests, skills, supports utilized, etc.
- Connect with mentors with disabilities who can share information about accommodations
- Role play describing the impact of disability to Disability Services for Students

Self-Advocacy Exploration

Learning ABOUT self-advocacy

Explore rights, responsibilities, and how to request accommodations or services and supports. Learn what self-advocacy means and why it is essential to a successful transition into adulthood.

Sample Student Outcome

Student can request accommodations they will need for use in education and/or employment.

Experiences might include:

- Develop a description of self/disability and accommodations/modifications. Share with teachers.
- Recent graduates speak to students about their self-advocacy experiences
- Class addressing disability disclosure
- School-wide Americans with Disabilities Act training, Disability History Day
- Complete the Self-Advocacy Checklist or AIR Self-Determination Form
- Explore the Job Accommodation Network website to learn about workplace accommodations
- Review the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities Self-Determination Toolkit
- Self-advocacy workshop facilitated by the local Independent Living Center

Self-Advocacy Preparation

Learning THROUGH advocacy

Apply learning through practical experiences. Activities will have consequences and value beyond the classroom and may be applicable to both education and employment.

Sample Student Outcome

Student has self-developed goals and knows how to take the first step to achieving those goals.

Experiences might include:

- Assist with developing IEP goals; invite supportive participants to IEP meeting
- Practice disclosure in various settings
- Set one or two relevant personal self-advocacy goals for the school year
- Practice discussing individual strengths and leadership skills
- Plan and attend visits with local VR counselors and/or college-based staff to research opportunities for post-secondary employment and education
- Use a visual resume to share “best self”, disclose disability, explain AT needs, and ask for accommodations
- Explore Supported Decision Making and alternatives to guardianship
- Opportunities for making and carrying out plans based upon choices

Self-Advocacy Training

Learning FOR success

Train for self-advocacy skill demonstration across a variety of settings and in multiple situations, including but not limited to post-secondary education and employment.

Sample Student Outcome

Student demonstrates the skills to communicate their goals, support needs, interests, skills and abilities.

Experiences might include:

- Lead own IEP meeting(s)
- Participate in Montana Youth Leadership Forum or MYLF-Mini
- Attend Youth Track workshops at the Transition Conference
- Evaluate self-advocacy for effectiveness and improve strategies
- Present portfolio to an employer
- Prepare a list of needed accommodations to discuss with Disability Services for Students
- Present to the Student Council or even a Legislative Committee about Disability History and Civil Rights
- Participate in an advocacy group (KASA, People First, Youth M.O.V.E., etc.)