



## Charting the Life Course

**Supporting Families in their role of  
Fostering Self-Determination in Children**

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## Life Course Framework

**Life is a journey.**  
*Our lives are not static, they change every day.*

**It's all about vision.**  
*Anything is possible, with the right vision.*

**Everything is connected.**  
*What you do today affects your life in the future.*

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## I Want to be a Cowgirl

**Supporting Families in their role of  
Fostering Self-Determination in Children**

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## Susan Bird

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Individual Advocacy & Family Support Team

Mom to Elizabeth

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## Objectives for Today



- Explore the meaning of self-determination
- Consider the importance of promoting self-determination
- Review ideas and strategies across the life course

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## What is Self-Determination

Individual capacity associated with disability rights, related to assuming control and the right to make decisions rather than being acted upon by others.



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## Self-Determination

- FREEDOM: to choose
- SUPPORT: in ways that are unique to the individual
- RESPONSIBILITY: to contribute to one's community
- ENRICHES: by focusing on the desires & abilities of the individual
- INVOLVES: the individual in all decisions about him/her (nothing about me without me)
- RESPECTFUL: of the individual

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## Why is Self-Determination Important?

- Self Determination in High School is related to positive transition outcomes
  - More likely to be employed as adults
  - Earn more per hour
  - More likely to express a preference to live outside the family home
  - More likely to have a savings/checking account
  - Report experiencing a higher quality of life
  - Better socioeconomic status may lead to better health outcomes

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## Elizabeth

"No I can't walk, I ride a horse!"




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## How do young people get it?

- Real world experiences
  - Taking risks, making mistakes, reflecting on outcomes, trying again with a new strategy
- Open supportive acknowledgement and discussion of their disability
  - Understanding how their disability might affect academic learning, relationships, employment, participation in community, & the need for supports

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## Griffin

"He could be a jockey!"



Don't assume my intelligence is less because I do not speak.  
I do not judge you for not listening.




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## Self-Determination within the Family System

**\*Families:** will be supported in ways that maximizes their capacity, strengths and unique abilities **so they can best support, nurture, love and facilitate.....**

**Individual with Disability:** achievement of self-determination, interdependence, productivity, integration and inclusion in all facets of community life



\*National Definition for "Supporting Families" (2011 Wingspread)

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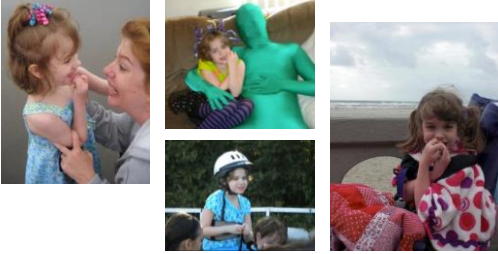
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# Abby

"The doctors said I would never walk."




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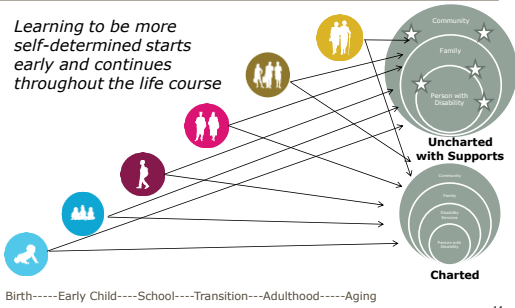
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## ★ Fostering Self-Determination

Learning to be more self-determined starts early and continues throughout the life course




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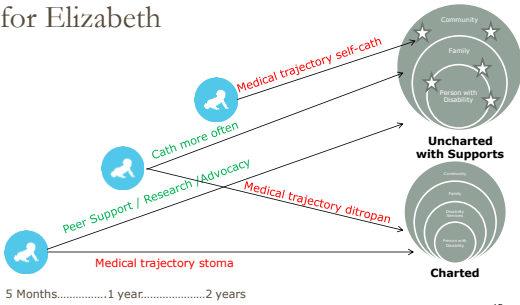
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## Fostering Self-Determination for Elizabeth




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### Family Support throughout the Life Course Supporting the Individual in the Family System



- Promote making choices
- Encourage exploring possibilities
- Promote reasonable risk taking
- Promote advocacy
- Help develop self esteem
- Help set goals and plan
- Help understand the disabilities/special needs
- Encourage problem solving

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### Shaylee

"These are my kids."

- Raises:
  - Bunnies
  - Chickens
  - Goats
  - 3 Llamas
  - 2 Horses
  - 1 Calf




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### How can Parents/Family Help?

- Provide opportunities to make meaningful decisions
- Be open to new possibilities
- Take child/youth's dreams seriously
- Have high but realistic expectations




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Ben

"I want to be a fireman."



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### Family Support

- Shift responsibility in whatever areas you can
- Let go of some control and decision making power
- Help locate a self-advocacy group
- View your child as an adult!



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Andrew

What can you do if you put your mind to it?



- 5K
- 10K
- Half Marathon

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## Cindy

"My facial deformity was the greatest gift I have ever been given"

- One day I came home from elementary school crying. My mom said: "Cindy, you have to learn to fight your battles for yourself. *And your premise should be based on the fact they are not right about you, just ignorant.*"
- It was the best advice to give a young child. My way of fighting was to become the best me.
- *I felt I was born different to be different.* And what a life that mentality has given me!

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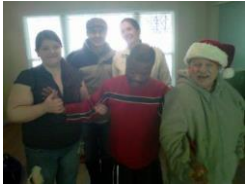
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## Calvin

Looks can be deceiving.




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## Future Vision – Day to Day Nudging




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What do you want to be?



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### Survey

Please take the time to fill out your evaluation of this webinar and tell us what you thought!

[surveymonkey.com/s/f2fselfdetermination](http://surveymonkey.com/s/f2fselfdetermination)



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### Special Thanks

- MODHSS Special Health Care Needs
- Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council
- DMH Regional Offices & Family Support Coordinators



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## For more information

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Contact

**Missouri Family to Family**

800-444-0821

[mofamilytofamily.org](http://mofamilytofamily.org)



**UMKC-Institute for Human  
Development**

[www.ihd.umkc.edu](http://www.ihd.umkc.edu)



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