



## Self Determination and Partnerships for Success

### **Q. What is *Partnership for Success*?**

*Partnerships for Success* is a high school based program founded on the belief that a student's ability to make important life decisions for the future must begin by high school. Teachers, transition specialists, and graduation coaches, are using this program to assist students in discovering who they are, where they want to go, and how to get there. To help students consider the endless possibilities for their lives, *Partnerships for Success* provides the opportunity for students to participate in activities that enhance their educational experience. The program provides students fun experiences in the areas of recreation, social activities, sports, and community service, which allows them to make a contribution to their school and community at large.

The building blocks the *Partnerships for Success* model uses to assist youth in developing self-determination and leadership skills are:



Self-Determination instruction

Active participation in the IEP meeting

Futures Planning

Partnerships for Success Clubs

For additional information go to [www.partnershipsforsuccess.com](http://www.partnershipsforsuccess.com)

### **Q. Why are schools tying the concept of self determination to transition planning?**

Students who are given the opportunity to practice self-determination skills show an increase understanding of their accommodations, enhanced self-confidence and the ability to advocate for themselves. Students who have these skills are able to more clearly identify what their post school goals are, improving post-school outcomes. This knowledge can create more meaningful connections to coursework, volunteerism and employment leading to richer transition plans.

### **Q. What is the most important thing teachers do to assist students with transition planning?**

When teachers help students understand the importance of their accommodations and give them opportunities to practice self-determination skills such as; setting goals, decision making, problem solving, career exploration, voicing their future desires and interest, students become an active participant in their transition plan. Giving students an opportunity to make decisions about his/her future increases the likelihood of a successful transition.

### **Q. When should parents begin transition planning? And what if they start late?**

Transition planning is a concrete action plan that requires long-range planning that focuses on guiding and preparing students for life after high school. The team identifies, plans and carries out activities which will help the student make a successful transition to adult life. The state rules for special education require that transition plans be in place prior to the

student entering ninth grade or by age 16, whichever comes first; however it is never too early to begin teaching children self-advocacy skills. When parents give children opportunities such as; exploration of their environment, choice making and decision making, they are providing opportunities for children to develop self-determination skills needed in determining their future direction. As early as possible, parents should assist their child with identifying his/her abilities and interest and begin thinking about how to use these skills in their adult life.