

**SELF-DETERMINATION.ORG**



Self-Determination Inventory:  
Self-Report (SDI:SR)  
*Student Report Guide*



## What is Self-Determination?

Self-determination is a dispositional characteristic associated with acting as the **causal agent** in one's life. That is, if people are self-determined they tend to display self-determination throughout their lives, although, the support available in the environment can influence the development and expression of self-determination.

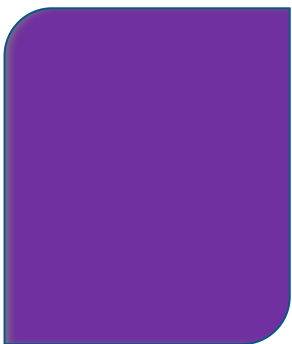
When students act as causal agents, they act with intent to achieve goals they have chosen in their lives. They show three essential characteristics that are assessed on the Self-Determination Inventory – (1) *volitional action*, (2) *agentic action*, and (3) *action-control beliefs*. These essential characteristics emerge across the lifespan as children and adolescents learn skills and develop attitudes that enable them to be causal agents in their lives. Skills associated with self-determined action include choice making, problem solving, decision making, goal setting and attainment, self-advocacy, and self-management skills and key attitudes include self-awareness and self-knowledge. With a better understanding of students' self-determination using data collected through the Self-Determination Inventory, teachers can identify skills to target that support learning and achievement for all students.

# Essential Characteristics of Self-Determined Action



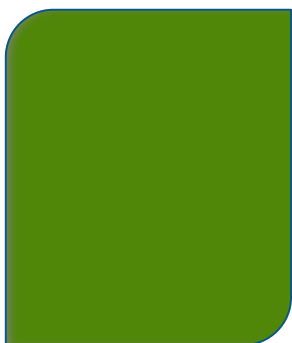
## Volitional Action

- Autonomy
- Self-Initiation



## Agentic Action

- Pathways Thinking
- Self-Direction
- Self-Regulation



## Action-Control Beliefs

- Control-Expectancy
- Psychological Empowerment
- Self-Realization



# Volitional Action

Making intentional, conscious choices based on one's preferences and interests

Teaching and creating opportunities in choice-making, decision-making, goal setting, problem solving, and planning skills enables volitional action to develop.

<i>Autonomy</i>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Acting based on one's preferences, interests and abilities without undue outside influence.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You identify and choose what clubs to be a part of at school based on what you are most interested in and what will support you in achieving your goals in life.</p>	<p><b>Teaching strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate opportunities to explore activities to develop interests and preferences.</li><li>• Provide frequent opportunities to make choices.</li><li>• Promote participation in group decision-making (IEP meetings, person-centered planning, etc.)</li></ul>
<i>Self-Initiation</i>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Initiating action to achieve a goal, using past experiences to guide you.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You seek information about joining a hiking club because you have gone hiking in the past and really liked it.</p>	<p><b>Teaching strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support participation in community activities and volunteer opportunities.</li><li>• Discuss and explore job interests, hobbies, and personal strengths.</li><li>• Encourage developing a person-centered plan based on interests and goals.</li></ul>

# Agentic Action

Self-directing and managing actions toward goals

Teaching and creating opportunities for self-management and goal attainment enables agentic action to develop.

<p><i>Pathways Thinking</i></p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Identifying many different ways to solve problems that you encounter in working to reach your goals.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You don't have a book you need to complete your homework so you think to either go to your locker to get it or borrow the book from a friend.</p>	<p><b>Teaching strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach how to weigh potential costs, benefits, and outcomes of choices.</li><li>• Encourage ownership of challenges and solutions in problem solving.</li><li>• Create opportunities for students to problem solve in structured and naturally-occurring environments.</li></ul>
<p><i>Self-Direction</i></p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Directing the actions that you take toward your goals and responding to challenges and opportunities.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You want to be a captain on your football team, you work hard, and accept the position when it is offered to you.</p>	<p><b>Teaching strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow students to make and learn from mistakes.</li><li>• Teach language that can be used to advocate for personal rights and aspirations.</li><li>• Provide opportunities for leadership roles.</li></ul>

# Agentic Action

Self-directing and managing actions toward goals

## *Self-Regulation*

**Definition:**

Managing and evaluating the actions that you take to reach your goals.

**Example:**

You want to go to the movies with your friends and need a ride there so you ask them to pick you up, identifying the time that you need to leave your house to get to the movie on time.

**Teaching strategies:**

- Teach and support self-monitoring techniques.
- Teach personal management skills (i.e., time management, organization, financial planning).
- Encourage the development of a five-year plan, or road map, with short-term objectives to take steps towards a personal goal.

# Action-Control Beliefs

Recognizing your own abilities and believing they will help you achieve your goals

Teaching and creating opportunities for self-awareness and self-knowledge enables *action-control beliefs* to develop.

<p><i>Control-Expectancy</i></p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Believing that you can use your skills and the resources (i.e., people, supports) around you to reach a goal.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You work hard during after school tutoring hours, knowing that working hard will let you make progress toward your goal of earning an A in math.</p>	<p><b>Teaching strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage students to reflect on goals reached and the skills they used to do so.</li><li>• Support students in creating support networks in multiple environments (home, school, work, etc.)</li><li>• Create opportunities for students to seek help from peers or other natural supports and talk about the relationship between seeking support and achieving goals.</li></ul>
<p><i>Psychological Empowerment</i></p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Believing that you have what it takes to reach your goals and that you can reach your goals when you try.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> You decide to take honors classes because you know you can do it and it will help you attend the college.</p>	<p><b>Teaching strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set high expectations.</li><li>• Encourage students to identify their strengths and apply them.</li><li>• Support students in self-evaluation to encourage belief in abilities and increase self-confidence.</li></ul>

# Action-Control Beliefs

Recognizing your own abilities and believing they will help you achieve your goals

## *Self- Realization*

**Definition:**

Using what you know about your personal strengths and weaknesses to act in ways that lead to your goals.

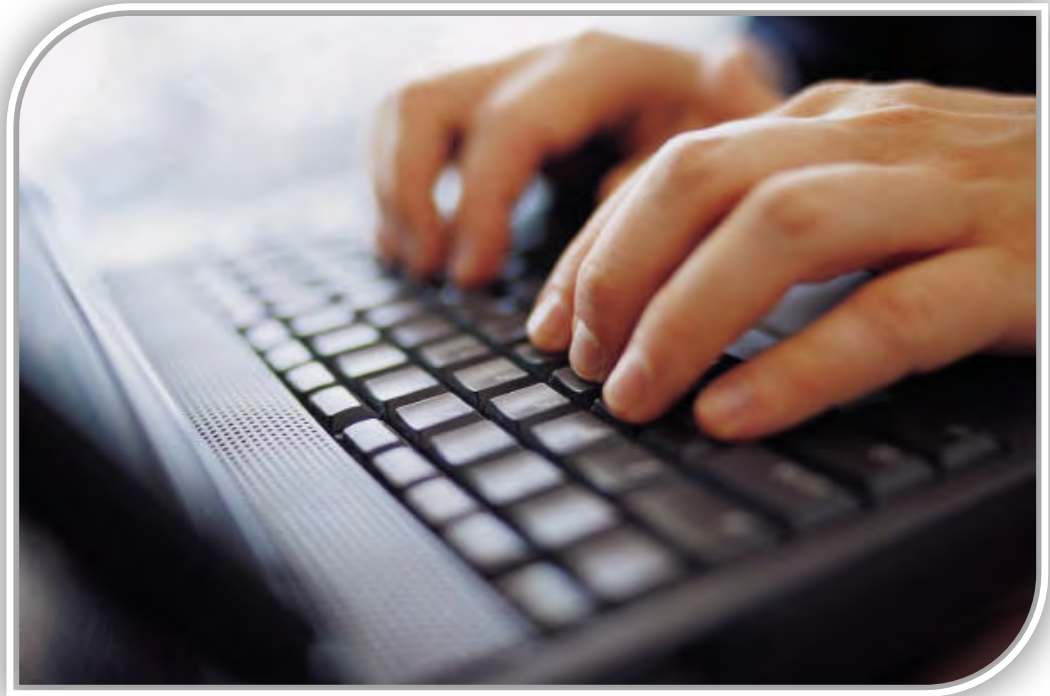
**Example:**

You know you have good leadership skills and are good at working with people, so you decide to run for president of your class.

**Teaching strategies:**

- Teach students to understand their strengths and support needs.
- Encourage students to identify and utilize personal support systems (i.e., friends, family, teachers).
- Provide opportunities for students to become knowledgeable about available supports and to advocate for them.





## Websites Useful for Supporting Student Self-Determination

### Beach Center on Disability

The Beach Center on Disability is a research center at the University of Kansas that supports individuals with disabilities, their families, service providers, researchers, and policy makers through research, information distribution and training. Topics useful to educators on self-determination and access to the general education curriculum may be found in the *Real Stories and Tips* and *Books, Manuals and Reports* sections of this website.

For further information contact:

**Beach Center on Disability**

The University of Kansas

1200 Sunnyside Avenue

3134 Haworth Hall

Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7534

Voice: (785) 864-7600

Fax: (785) 864-7605

Email: [beachcenter@ku.edu](mailto:beachcenter@ku.edu)

Website: <http://www.beachcenter.org/>

# Self-Determination Resources

## National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)

NCSET coordinates national resources, offers technical assistance, and disseminates information related to secondary education and transition for youth with disabilities. Links include topics on:

### Postsecondary Education and Employment

- Teaching and Learning
- Transition Planning and Community Resources
- Youth Development and Family Participation

For more information contact:

### **National Center on Secondary Education and Transition**

Institute on Community Integration  
University of Minnesota  
6 Pattee Hall  
150 Pillsbury Drive SE  
Minneapolis MN 55455  
612-624-2097 (phone)  
612-624-9344 (fax)  
Email: [ncset@umn.edu](mailto:ncset@umn.edu)  
Website: <http://www.ncset.org/>

## Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI)

ICI is located at the University of Massachusetts Boston. ICI supports the rights of children and adults with disabilities to participate in all aspects of the community. Key interest areas for educators include:

- Employment of people with disabilities in community settings
- Promotion of technology that aids participation in school/community/work activities

For additional information contact:

### **Institute for Community Inclusion/UCEDD**

100 Morrissey Blvd.  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
Voice: (617) 287-4300  
Fax: (617) 287-4352  
TTY: (617) 287-4350  
Email: [ici@umb.edu](mailto:ici@umb.edu)  
Website:  
<http://www.communityinclusion.org/>

## National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)

NTACT assists state and local agencies including Vocational Rehabilitation providers in implementing evidence-based practices to ensure students with disabilities graduate and are prepared for postsecondary education and employment. Key interest areas for educators include:

- Effective practices to ensure students graduate
- Post-school success resources

For additional information contact:

### **National Technical Assistance Center on Transition**

Voice: (704) 687-8606  
Email: [ntactmail@uncc.edu](mailto:ntactmail@uncc.edu)  
Or ask a question via their website:  
<http://www.transitiona.org/>

