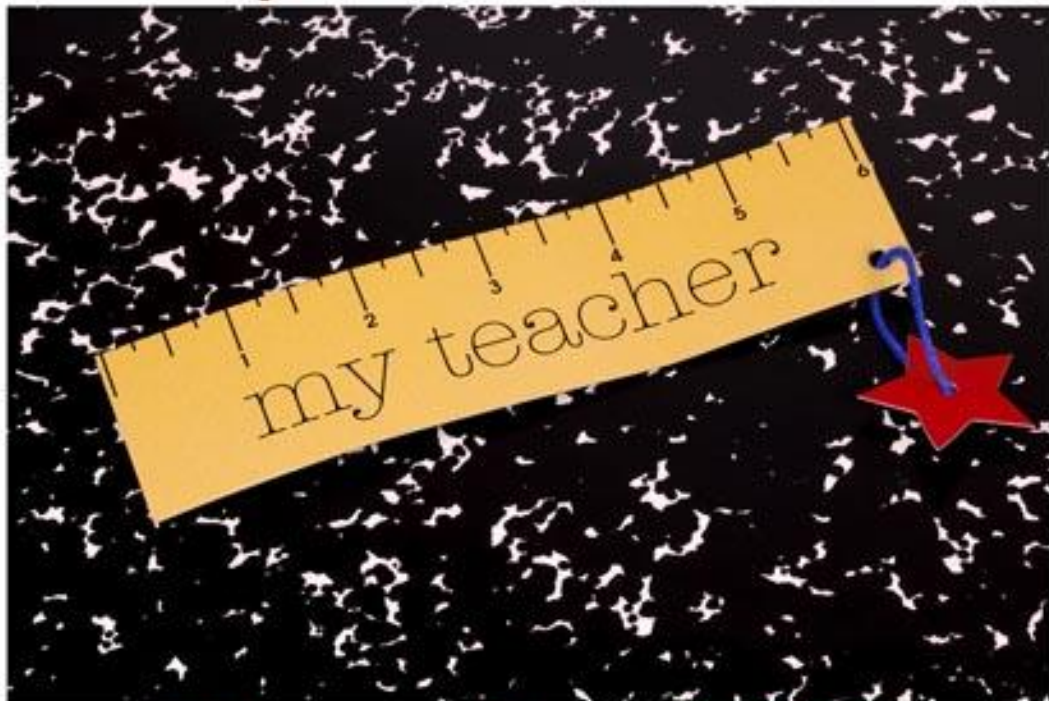


# **NASET Special Educator e-Journal**



## **November 2018**

## Table of Contents

- [Special Education Legal Alert. By Perry A. Zirkel](#)
- [Laws and Policies of Independent Living for Individuals with Disabilities in the United States. By Sarah Al-Sharif](#)
- [Book Review: Leading in a Culture of Change. By Adianez Alfonso](#)
- [Intrinsic Motivation: Motivating Gifted Students in the Classroom. By Qamrah Alsubaie](#)
- [Book Review: Leadership is an Art. By Melissa Smiley](#)
- [The Impact of Full Inclusion on Students with Disabilities. By Sarah Gomez](#)
- [Teacher Preparation for Instruction of Exceptional Student Education Students in the General Education Classroom. By Katherine J. Ramirez](#)
- [Immigrant Parents Advocating in Special Education: A Literature Review. By Amairany Paniagua](#)
- [Book Review: How Autism is Reshaping Special Education. By Stephanie Zacharias](#)
- [Buzz from the Hub](#)
- [Latest Job Postings Posted on NASET](#)
- [Acknowledgments](#)

# Special Education Legal Alert

Perry A. Zirkel

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This month's alert is an update of the legal alert for July 2018, which provided the state-by-state percentages of so-called "504-only" students as of 2015–16, which is the latest available data from the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). The first is a summary of the district-level rates, and the second is a summary of the school level rates. The full analyses are available at [perryzirkel.com](http://perryzirkel.com), where you can also sign up for automatic e-mailing of the future alerts under "Monthly Legal Updates."

**The follow-up analysis of the rate of "504-only" students (i.e., those with 504 plans, not "double-covered" students with IEPs) at the school district level, based on the 2015–2016 CRDC, revealed widespread variance. The full version of this analysis is available under the Section 504 and the ADA subheading of the Publications list on [perryzirkel.com](http://perryzirkel.com)—"School District Rates of 504-Only Students." Limited to districts with enrollments of at least 1250 students, a spreadsheet, which lists the districts in descending order of 504-only percentage, is available on the homepage of this website under "What's New."**

The 50 top districts ranged from a high of 15.5% down to 9.8%, which is slightly more than four times the national average of 2.3%. Most were in the states with the high 504-only rates, and only one was a charter school.

These high rates seem to provide reasonable suspicion of over-identification, although alternative explanations, such as data errors or district peculiarities, may be contributing factors. In general, over-identification is often attributable to insufficient application to the second and third eligibility criteria—major life activity and substantial.

The bottom end of the list is more predominant. Specifically, 327 districts with at least 1250 students had 0% (i.e., not a single) 504-only student. The correlation with the state rate was less pronounced than for the top group, and the number of special status districts, such as those that were vo-tech or charter schools, was still relatively small.

Compared to over-identification the high end, these zero percentages are even stronger indications of under-identification. Again, other contributing factors may explain this reported zero rate, careful attention is warranted in terms of the prevailing procedures and practicing for identifying eligibility for 504 plans. Among other resources, my website provides an eligibility form and by the end of this year will provide the details for Lehigh University's next 504 Institute, which will be on campus on June 27–28, 2019.

As stated in the intro, you can check the rate for your or any other district with an enrollment of at least 1250 students on a spreadsheet posted on the homepage of [perryzirkel.com](http://perryzirkel.com). The full data, including the 504-only figures for smaller districts, are available at the CRDC website, <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/>

If you have specific corrections for the CRDC figures, which are based on survey submissions from each district, please report them directly to CRDC. On a less belated basis, it is advisable to double-check for errors in submission for the 2017-18 iteration of the biannual CRDC survey.

<p><b>The follow-up he follow-up analysis of the rate of “504-only” students, based on the 2015–2016 CRDC, revealed even wider variance at the school level. The full version of this analysis is available under the Section 504 and the ADA subheading of the Publications list on <a href="http://perryzirkel.com">perryzirkel.com</a>—“School Rates of 504-Only Students. Limited to schools with enrollments of at least 250 students, a spreadsheet, which lists the districts in descending order of 504-only percentage, is available on the homepage of this website under “What’s New.”</b></p>	
<p>The 50 schools with the highest rates ranged from a high of 34.7% down to 18.8%, which is eight times the national average of 2.3%. The correlation with state rates was moderate, and approximately one third of these schools had a special focus or charter status.</p>	<p>The practical problems of implementing the 504 plans and related requirements of Section 504 in these schools is, in a word, mind-boggling, particularly in light of the unavailability—in contrast with the IDEA—of federal and state funds. As with the corresponding top group at the district level, these schools appear to warrant special attention to possible over-identification.</p>
<p>The bottom end was even more striking in extent as well as rate. More specifically, 12,229 schools with an enrollment of at least 250 reportedly did not have a single student with a 504 plan. The correlation with the state rate was limited and, again, approximately one third of the schools had a special focus or charter status.</p>	<p>These 0% relatively sizable schools appear to signal significant pattern of suspected under-identification in light of (a) Section 504’s broad definition of eligibility that—unlike the IDEA—does not require educational impact; (b) the ADA amendments effective expansion of the applicable eligibility standards; and (c) the rising diagnoses of attention deficit disorder, asthma, food allergies, and anxiety disorders in recent years.</p>
<p>As stated in the intro, you can check the rate for your or any other school with an enrollment of at least 250 students on a spreadsheet posted on the homepage of <a href="http://perryzirkel.com">perryzirkel.com</a>. The full data, including the 504-only figures for smaller districts, are available at the CRDC website, <a href="https://ocrdata.ed.gov/">https://ocrdata.ed.gov/</a></p>	<p>Again, corrections should be reported to CRDC and reviewed on a timelier basis for the 2017-18 data submission. In any event, given the relative inattention to the child find and identification requirements of Section 504 in comparison to those under the IDEA, school leaders should review their current policies and practices for adherence to the applicable eligibility standards for 504 plans.</p>

# **Laws and Policies of Independent Living for Individuals with Disabilities in the United States**

**By Sarah AL-Sharif**

## **Abstract**

Independent living has been defined to mean support for daily independence for individuals with various types of disabilities. Gaining absolute autonomy could be challenging but creating necessary aid to make the disabled as independent as possible is considered a significant intervention towards independent living. The concept of independent living has garnered various interpretations from different people and organizations. Though the descriptions present the same ideas and concepts, independent living could be defined as an initiative aimed to typically provide individuals with disabilities with the opportunities to live their lives like everyone else in society.

## **Introduction**

Most individuals in society with developmental, physical, and mental challenges meet various challenges meeting the daily activities such as cooking, transportation, recreational and other domestic and corporate duties (Fish, 2011). For instance, individuals with physical challenges experience constraints in accessing social transportation. Their status makes them unable to rely on themselves in meeting the daily demands of life. Their inability to live independently has accumulated perception and culture towards people with disabilities. Many people view such individuals or a group of such individuals as a social liability. They see them as beneficiaries and charity and collectively perceived to have low social class in the society. In a similar manner, they are perceived and treated as the 'last options' in aiding them to meet their needs. Such social dimension has made them 'lesser beings' hence have to attract my interest in the topic of study. Families and individuals taking care of the disabled in the society have as well come up with the same neglect culture (Bond, Johnson, Becker, Drake & Greene, 2016). Most of them perceive them as extra load, responsibility and treat them with minimal concern. According to Bond et al., 2016, the culture of discrimination and isolation subjects the disabled to painful and challenging lifestyle.

Typical examples of challenges individuals experience include lack of ramped paths for people with wheelchairs. Entrances to the public and social building, including educational and work areas ought to have ramp routes for the challenged. Their omission outlines an example of the challenges they experience in the society. ADA aims to minimize such discriminatory concern in the society by pushing for equity irrespective of one's inabilities of challenges. As well, lack of interpreter's acts as a major barrier to communication among the deaf. Such barriers or omissions in the society set them away from their rights (Fish, 2011). Similarly, lack of captions for individuals with hearing challenges makes daily life extremely challenging. Lack of brails, brailled documents, or assistive gadgets to support an individual with sight challenges enhances the complexity of their daily life. Technically, such challenges make independent living a challenge for the disabled. As such, individuals with disabilities do not have only to deal

with their challenges but also feel the impact of the social impact such as discrimination. To a great extent, very few individuals will respond to such omissions of dependency and overreliance in the society.

### **What is the Concept of ‘Independent Living’?**

Independent living, according to the Disability Achievement Center, refers to the ability of the disabled to play and work for everyone. Their definition includes elements of non-discrimination and advocates that independent living is not just a program, but a commitment to enhance equity to the world of the disabled. The center also refers to independent living as the provision of rights and the opportunity to advance own actions without heavy reliance on others. It collectively refers to providing the disabled in society with opportunities to actualize their aspirations and life choices. In a different light, independent living is perceived as a collection of interventions initiated to make life experiences of the disabled to seem as normal as the able people in society (Kopriva, 2008). This idea refers to providing the disabled with an average life by equipping and empowering them to use public facilities such as the transportation systems, making public places accessible and creating job opportunities for them. It is a philosophy aimed to bridge the gap socially established between the able and the disabled in society.

### **Justification**

Warble (2004) ascertains that the disabled in the society do not have to experience the challenges they face in meeting their daily challenges due to lack of life supportive tools or policies. The principle of ‘Independent Living’ has great importance to the society. It serves as a remedy to aid individuals with disabilities live better and more comfortably as compared to its omission. Independent living aims at improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. It focuses on legal and social inclusion to ensure equitable treatment by actualizing their needs. Independent living refers to the ability for the challenged to live a standard life without heavily relying on family and another people’s support on a daily basis. It is an important undertaking aimed at providing the disabled with equal opportunities to pursue their goals, work, and overall social projects (Bond et al., 2016). It is a motivational support which gives the disabled opportunities to live a normal life like ‘everyone else’ in the society. It is a self-determination social support to increase quality and value of life experiences for the disabled. Moreover, it acts as a drive to freedom; freedom to try and fail, to learn, to improve and consequently to input happiness and value in their lives. Collectively, independent living refers to the availability of opportunities to achieve own targets and be personally responsible for decisions and initiatives.

### **Theoretical Perception and Literature on Independent Living**

#### **The Independent Living Model**

Embracing independent living is a potential undertaking to actualize the value and productivity for individuals with disabilities and much other disadvantaged in the society. The concept of independent living focuses on eliminating unjust and unwanted dependency in the society (Wrobel, 2004). The movement for independent living has been focused to ensure progressive development in encouraging independent living. The campaign’s initiatives are enacted

by many community-based centers which focus on providing the disabled in the society acquire opportunities as normal community members. Historically, the movement was formed to protect the civil rights of the disabled in America. The principal aim was to ensure the disabled free themselves from societal segregation and discrimination and propel their rights to participate and enjoy the joy of the overall society. Since the movement's inception in the 1960s, top priorities have remained with the intention to make freedom and rights to everyone in the society regardless of their social, economic, or physical participation, employment, public facilities and affordable housing (Wrobel, 2004). The movement as well seeks for its members to acquire rights and freedom to live outside centers, get supportive services to strengthen independent living and have the right to bear and adopt children. Collectively, the movement pushes for equitable life and opportunities for the disabled in the society with a focus on eliminating unfairness and segregation.

### **Laws and Policy in the US Related to Independent Living for People with Disabilities**

The US has put in place a very instructive and supportive system that helps people with disabilities to live an independent life. However, most Americans have not recognized the importance of these new opportunities that span many areas of life including living arrangements, employment circumstances, transportation, social and leisure activities, and various other parts of everyday life (Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring, 2012). Most Americans with disabilities still encounter challenges within their communities that hinder or adversely impair their choices. Such barriers can be obvious and include the absence of ramped entrances to help people who are using wheelchairs, the absence of interpreters or captioning to help people who have hearing impairments, and the absence of Brailled, digital or documented prints of material to assist persons with visual impairments (Creative, 2016). In addition, other challenges, though often less obvious, may involve a more restrictive environment that is oblivious of the efforts by people with disabilities to live independently. Most of the time, this is because of people's misinterpretations and prejudices concerning disability. Therefore, these barriers often lead to low expectations regarding what people with disabilities can achieve. As such, persons with disabilities, besides dealing with the effects of their disabilities, must deal with the barriers imposed on them by society. A failure to deal with these barriers means that they will be limited to a life of dependency, meaning a lowered personal satisfaction. The Disabilities Act is therefore enacted to address this scenario where persons with disabilities are empowered to make choices that help them to be independent and live without or with as little assistance as possible (Creative, 2016). Currently, millions of people in the US who have varied forms of disabilities have established independent lives. These people can fulfill various kinds of roles within their communities, and these roles involve being employers, employees, marriage partners, parents, students, athletes, and politicians among others; the list is endless. Generally, the barriers facing most of these people have not been removed — although these people have successfully overcome or at least dealt with them. Within this context, it is important to define what independent living means with respect to societal boundaries (Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring, 2012). Essentially, this is living, working, and playing as everybody else, and getting the opportunity to make decisions that have an effect on one's life. In addition, independent living may also entail pursuing activities that the person with disability chooses and being limited only in similar ways to those without disabilities

Therefore, independent living is not defined as a disabled person living entirely on their own, but being engaged in a job that fits the person's capabilities and interests or generally having a lively social life. Such are the aspects of living



independently (Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring, 2012). Independent living is more concerned with self-determination. It involves getting the right and the opportunity to follow an independently chosen course of action. It also implies that the disabled person has the freedom to fail and learn from such failures. While looking at independent living for people, it is important to be cognizant of some of these persons with disabilities that have mental impairments that can affect their abilities to make difficult decisions or handle complex activities. For such people, independent living implies having the opportunity to attain self-sufficiency as much as possible (Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring, 2012). Notably, independent living is not as simple as it looks, and it is sometimes risky, although millions of people who have disabilities are rated as having better quality of life than a life of dependency, limited opportunities, and unsatisfied expectations. There are several laws and policies that define what independent living for people with disabilities means in the US. Most important is the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)*, which forbids any form of discrimination against persons with disabilities and therefore ensures that such people have equal opportunity in all spheres of life including employment (Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring, 2012). Other areas where ADA extends its regulation includes within state and local government services, public housing, commercial amenities, and transportation.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 also dictates the creation of TDD/telephone relay services specifically sensitive to those persons with disabilities. The ADA was eventually revised through the *ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325)* that afterwards became active on 1st January 2009. The ADA is codified at 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

Generally, *the 2008 ADA Amendments Act* emphasized various important changes to the implication and understanding of the Act's definition of "disability." This was meant to ensure that this description would be generally interpreted and applied without far-reaching analysis.

On 15th July 2016, the Attorney General Loretta Lynch signed a Final Rule that includes the requirements of the ADA Amendments Act within ADA's title II and title III regulations. As such the Final Rule was printed in the Federal Register on 11th August 2016, and has taken effect on 11th October 2016, 60 days from publication.

### **National policy and independent living.**

National policy started in the early 1960s aimed at ensuring all individuals benefited from their rightful access to public utilities (Button & Applequist, 2008). The policy was motivated by the high degree of stigmatization of the challenged in society. It aimed at ensuring that disabled individuals can live independently in a manner that these individuals can achieve their own objectives in life. The national policy, in a similar manner, focused on enhancing the quality of independent living by proposing and passing policies favoring the challenged. For instance, *the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* fostered research for the needs of the disabled in society. In hand with the researchers, it upholds a provision of rights to establish community-based centers to enhance independent living among the affected. Its funding policy created a pool for human rights activists to initiate further demands for protection and promotion of independent living. In the national policy agenda, *Section 504* played a critical role by prohibiting discrimination by disability (Button & Applequist, 2008).



The section stipulated that any activity showing discrimination among projects funded by the federal government were unconstitutional. The clause also stated that the disadvantaged are part of society in a similar manner to the rest of the groups in society that need protection from discrimination. *Section 504* also purported that the disabled had the right to benefit from interventions of the government in ensuring every member of society benefits from its projects, particularly in enhancing independent living. Further amendments increased benefits to the disabled in the community by increasing their eligibility to more diversified project requirements. In 1974, interventions with specific projects for the disabled started. As such, the previously ignored and discriminated group of the disabled were gaining more potentials and benefits through constitutional policy amendments. The initiated projects as such led to value addition in enhancing the impacts of the federal projects in supporting independent living. Such projects created employment opportunities to the disabled. They also resulted in self-reliance among the target group and hence helped to actualize the concept of independent living.

### **PL 110-325: Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments -Act of 2008 (ADAA).**

Typically, *the ADA Amendments of 2008* aimed to extend the definition of the individuals and groups referred to as the disabled (Recupero & Harms, 2013).

The amendment stemmed from the initial *ADA Act of 1990*. Under the amendment of 2008, ADA broadened the definition for people who can be referred to as “with disabilities” as contrasted to the 1990 provision. The intention to redefine and broaden the concept of who can be referred to as being disabled was increased by various court rulings which were focusing on whether plaintiffs were disabled and, as such, discrimination in question. Courts were focusing on establishing whether presented claims involved disability rather than whether discrimination crime was committed. The increase in such rulings created the need to re-establish the 1990 ADA demands. Impairment leading to disability was considered less important when compared to the constitutional element of discrimination due to the same impairment.

Under ADAA, disability was referred to be any impairment limiting at least one or more major life events (Recupero & Harms, 2013). The amendment also broadened the definition for “major life events or activities.” Major life activities were set to include one's challenges in meeting specific bodily functions. As such, after the amendment, individuals experiencing body functioning challenges such as walking, seeing, and reading would fit to be covered under ADAA.

Other major life activities covered under ADAA include breathing, washing, bathing, bending, concentrating and other daily self-claimable activities. Challenges from achieving such undertakings by oneself would amount to a disability. Also, major bodily activities were established to include and not be limited to immune system functioning, normal cell growth, brain functioning, circulation, and digestive functions. Collectively, conditions that limited major life activities and bodily function under the 2008 amendment were established to meet the definition of disability. Again, the accommodation element was also refocused with ADAA requiring employers to explore remedial

undertaking for disabled employees (Recupero & Harms, 2013). Remedy strategies were articulated to include the provision of enhancing equipment, medication, vision and hearing aid devices and mobility devices. Technically, accommodation requirements were increased to ensure the employer's aid to the disabled have the capacity to meet their daily activities without discrimination. Such accommodation strategies were, however, set to be reasonable. It, therefore, allowed managerial decisions to determine the degree to which the management provides such accommodation.

Another remedial strategy highlighted under ADAA was the provision of assistive technology. In addition, the amendment was critical in enhancing protection of the disabled from discrimination and particularly in schools, work and in accessing public places. The amendment also aided in rebuking earlier Supreme Court rulings that focused on the justification for exclusion rather than the degree or presence of discrimination.

### **CEC Standards and Independent Living.**

By analyzing CEC standards, teachers and educators realize that CEC standards work together from the services of early intervention (Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. K4 Prevention and intervention strategies for individuals at risk for a disability) to design and implement instructional programs that address independent living and career education for individuals (Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. S27 Design and implement instructional programs that address independent living and career education for individuals). For instance, when a child with disabilities obtains all the different and various services that CEC standards have indicated, which related to early intervention (Initial Preparation Standard 4: Assessment- IGC.4. K4 Procedures for early identification of young individuals who may be at risk for exceptionalities), these services assist a child in avoiding a lot of issues and problems related to physical, emotional, or social development that could happen in the futures.

Moreover, according to Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies-IGC.5. K5 Strategies for integrating student-initiated learning experiences into ongoing instruction, and IGC.5. K1 Sources of specialized materials, curricula, and resources for individuals with exceptionalities, when teachers and educators use different strategies to teach a student with special needs, they can realize and identify the appropriate approach and methods to teach a student, and they can ascertain the student's abilities and disabilities, which assists a student in defining the field of higher education and the style of independent living they may desire in the future

According to Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. K3 Advantages and limitations of instructional strategies and practices for teaching individuals with exceptionalities, Initial Preparation Standard 6: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice- IGC.6. K7 and IGC.5. S23, select and specialized use of instructional strategies appropriate to the abilities and needs of the individual are factors that influence the overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with exceptionalities in programs for individuals with exceptionalities. In selecting, developing, and adapting to the learning experiences of persons with

disabilities, CEC standards require that special educators evaluate the individual's abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors (CEC, 2016).

Significantly, the connections involving these factors together with their implications of the person's disabilities provide a very important guideline that the special educator uses to select, adapt, and use a range of evidence based instructional strategies to enhance a positive learning outcome in general and special curriculum apart from suitably changing the learning environment for people with disabilities. Considering that learned skills are critical to achieving a fulfilled independent living status for such people, CEC requires that special educators teach customized literacy and numeracy, especially to those who are often considered non-responsive within tiered models.

According to Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. K3 and IGC.5. K7, advantages and limitations of instructional strategies and practices for teaching individuals with exceptionalities present methods for guiding individuals in identifying and organizing critical content. As such, these persons with disabilities receive emphasized and explicit instructions that accompany modeling and guided practicing to ensure that these people have developed the desired capacity to transfer these learning outcomes to assist them in independent living.

Since independent living is to a greater extent concerned with independent decision making. Per Initial Preparation Standard 2: Learning Environments- IGC.2. S5, students must use skills in problem solving and conflict resolution; CEC standards ensure that the 21st century student outcomes like critical thinking and problem solving as well as collaborative skills are adequately acquired by these students with disabilities so that it can eventually facilitate independent living (CEC, 2016). In this way, students with disabilities become aware and can apply self-management, reliance, control, and self-efficacy as well as advocacy.

Per, CEC standards, specifically Initial Preparation Standard 4: Assessment- IGC.4. S4: Assess reliable methods of response of individuals who lack typical communication and performance abilities and Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. S29: Design, implement, and evaluate instructional programs that enhance social participation across environments, community living and participation for people with disabilities is an extremely essential aspect to prepare a person with disabilities to independent living. To enhance a life skill like communication that is needed by the individual with disabilities during independent living, CEC recommends that special educators offer active language models and employ practical communication strategies as well as resources that will enable the individual with disabilities to understand the subject even when his or her main language is not English.

According to, Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5.S15: Teach strategies for organizing and composing written products, and IGC.5.S16: Implement systematic instruction to teach accuracy, fluency, and comprehension in content area reading and written language, and IGC.5.S17: Enhance vocabulary development , and IGC.5.S18 Teach strategies for spelling accuracy and generalization, and IGC.5.S19: Teach individuals with exceptionalities to monitor for errors in oral and written language , CEC standards focus on the significance of teaching a person with disabilities reading, writing skills and improving the different academic skills

that help a person with disabilities to be successful in higher education and to find an appropriate job. In this way, the individual with disabilities gets the opportunity to live independently without language barrier limitations that can expand the challenge that such persons with disabilities encounter whenever they assume independent living (CEC, 2016).

Per, Initial Preparation Standard 2: Learning Environments- IGC.2. S2: Use and maintain assistive technologies, and Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. S7: Use appropriate adaptations and technology for all individuals with exceptionalities, and IGC.5. S25: Select, design, and use technology, materials, and resources required to educate individuals whose exceptionalities interfere with communication, technology has been integrated through laws and policy to enrich the independent living experience. Special educators are guided by the CEC standards and use assistive technologies to support and enhance the learning experience. Using such supports together with individualized strategies enables these persons with disabilities to eventually gain the experience they need in using such assistive technology to help them during independent living. Because the CEC standards require that special educators implement a variety of personalized learning strategies that cover a wide range of settings and encompassing various learning experiences, the outcome from such learning is expected to introduce a dimension of behavior transformation that is critical in shaping the way these persons with disabilities carry on with independent living (CEC, 2016).

According to Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. S27 Design and implement instructional programs that address independent living and career education for individuals, and Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies-IGC.5. K9 Model career, vocational, and transition programs for individuals with exceptionalities, by organizing suitable transition services, the CEC standards also ensure that when the individual with disabilities qualifies to advance academically and beyond, they are cognizant of the supportive legislation and policies that have been put in place to ensure that this transition is made possible. Looking beyond the academic transitions, the experience gained by these persons with disabilities and the information that is availed to them is very important to ensuring their independent living.

### **Laws and Policy Related to Employment and Independent Living**

For most individuals who have disabilities, the Personal Assistance Services (PAS) can help to make their employment possible. Some of these people can use Personal Assistance Services to execute activities on a daily basis (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). Depending on the person in question, the PAS-dependent activities includes waking up and readying oneself for work, taking a bath, getting dressed, cooking, cleaning, and shopping.

Some people with disabilities can also use PAS at their workplace. Generally, examples of workplace PAS differ, although it generally involves activities like to retrieve materials that may otherwise appear to be out of reach for the person with disabilities. It can also involve providing travel assistance to help the employee who has mobility impairment. PAS in the workplace can also help an employee who is having a cognitive disability to make decision-making (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). Often, because the workplace involves the processing of information most of the time the PAS may also be used to help a person with disabilities to read printed materials, especially for the one

who is visually impaired. Additionally, the PAS will ensure that a sign language interpreter is available during meetings that involve an employee who is deaf. Whether at home or in the workplace, PAS is considered to be vital to ensure successful employment. While recognizing this fact, the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) continues to work in raising and expanding awareness of employment-related PAS possibilities.

Most importantly by meeting these people with disabilities' needs on and off the job highlights very critical policy issues involving both Federal and state governments, employers, service providers, and those people with disabilities. Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) recognizes PAS as an important issue not just for those people with disabilities looking for employment, but even for those in employment (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). Therefore, by improving PAS access and options, it is possible to decrease economic obstacles faced by people with disabilities, while increasing awareness about the importance of such direct care workers. Most States and employers have continuously worked towards finding ways that they can use public and private resources to provide a wider range of personal assistance services within the workplace (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). Apart from meeting these people's practical accommodation requirements, employers can also offer services based on their choice if they choose, they can also be assisted using their health insurance plans. Several states have focused on the expansion of public coverage to include personal assistance under Medicaid. Therefore, the Medicaid-based personal assistance services are initially confined within the home setting. In addition, most states have expanded the traditional PAS programs to include a variety of home as well as community-based disclaimer services like cooking, grocery shopping among others. All these policies are intended to offer support for the community residence that involves the elderly and youthful persons with disabilities. Often the waiver services are different from state planned services because they are available for only a specific group of people and not for every Medicaid beneficiary (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). Whereas these waiver services are meant to support independent living and community integration, typically these waivers are not designed for service involving people within the workplace. Considering that jobs consume a greater part of the lives of people with disabilities, most states have also adapted their current Medicaid personal assistance programs using waiver programs to workers who have disabilities. This process always entails an amendment to the medical eligibility requirements, to outline the new types of services or assistance. These adjustments also entail identifying suitable providers within the workplace. In addition, these states are also spreading Medicaid PAS service. In fact, a total of 26 states have developed more substantial financial admissibility rules to work with persons who have disabilities using the Medicaid Buy-In Program.

### **Workforce Investment Act of 1998.**

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 aims at advancing societal workforce skills and which plays a crucial role in enhancing employment and retention, economic freedom, and collectively increasing self-reliance (Cottingham & Besharov, 2011). WIA has been a succession of various acts such as the Jobs and Training Act of 1993 and it aims to increase functional independence. In its Title, the law provides opportunities to grow society's workforce development. Title one of WIA provides opportunities to the unskilled to train and enhance their skills from their local areas. The one-stop delivery program allows individuals to undertake training and referrals from their local areas. Title two aims at increasing literacy levels for the adults. It provides them with the opportunities to adult education hence making them more productive workforce.

Title three of WIA empowers support for the disabled by providing that grants for projects will provide educational training to individuals delivering rehabilitation services to people with disabilities (Cottingham & Besharov, 2011). The section of the law acts as a guide to increasing skills of educators to the disabled in society. Increasing their skills via academic training ensures the disabled get valuable services and such interventions boost their independence (independent living). Empowerments for the handicapped under section three include empowering them to employment opportunities through training, socialization, mobility, and social integration. Also, the law mandates grant and grants purporting the disabled to get access to rehabilitation centers and benefits from their respective services. Collectively, the WIA has a direct contribution to independent living for the disabled and actualizes their goals in job opportunities through training and provision of developmental changes in self-reliance.

### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act- 2014.**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was an amendment of the WIA law with its focus on advancing institutional and skill capacities for job seekers to meet market needs (Holland, 2016). The Act supports workforce needs such as training and other support services to increase the ability of job seekers to find employment. WIOA, through the Department of Labor, provides for adult education and training, which also includes dislocated workers. It also focuses on providing literacy and educational programs and rehabilitation grants for individuals with disabilities. This specific provision is essential to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to education and have skills necessary in the market. The act also fosters workforce suitability in society. Objectively, WIOA enhances the concept of independent living by offering services to the disabled (Holland, 2016). The law introduces the disabled to high-quality workforce training, making them occupationally fit and competitive in high ranking jobs.

The law also requires AJCs to provide both physical and programmatic training and employment accessibility for the disabled. Moreover, it demands extensive pre-employment services be given to youths with disabilities. It also stipulates allocation of funds to ensure smooth transitions to employment sectors. Again, the law advances the development of integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through the Secretary of Labor. Collectively, WIOA plays a significant role in advocating workforce empowerment for people with disabilities. Furthermore, by providing them with opportunities to employment, it acts as a crucial intervention in advancing independent living among persons with disabilities.

### **Laws Related to Community Involvement for People with Disabilities**

There are several laws in American law propelling the degree of community involvement for individuals with disabilities. For instance, the Rehabilitation Act acts as a pillar for community involvement regarding people with disabilities. The law prohibits discrimination of any nature based on an individual's disability. The law also provides that all individuals have equal rights to the utilization of public utilities, and their disability should not be used as a denial factor. Again, the Americans with Disabilities Act demands non-discrimination by sex, race, and disability. Violation of the law incurs heavy penalization by the state. Collectively, ADA demands that all citizens have equal rights and their participation in the community ought to be equitable



Furthermore, the IDEA entitles individuals with disabilities opportunity to a free, appropriate public education. The act propels the agenda “education for all” by targeting people with disabilities. The law as also fosters community involvement for people with disabilities in curriculum development. Furthermore, the act is supported by other legislation such as WIA. The Housing Act also advances the notion of community involvement for people with disabilities. Moreover, the movement of individuals with disabilities has established agreements that ensure their members have real participation in the community. Another law advancing community involvement of people with disabilities includes the Fair Housing Act and Assistive Technology Act. These laws seek to ensure individuals with disabilities in society get the benefits of housing grants and investment. The assistive technology law advocates for the provision of educational and training forums aimed at making disabled individuals more self-reliant by providing them with resources such as wheelchairs and other independence-aiding tools.

### **PL 93-112: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973.**

*The Rehabilitation Act of 1973* aimed at revising the benefits intended to meet the needs of the disabled in society (Button & Applequist, 2008). Objectively, the aims to increase benefits for individuals with severe disabilities in society. The act also seeks to expand the federal function in ensuring the challenged in society have the same opportunities as other citizens in accessing services provided by the government. It also fostered involvement of the challenged in accessing education, health, social welfare and other federal undertakings and projects funded either partially or fully by the government. Collectively, the Rehabilitation Act was passed with the objective of enhancing the quality of life for individuals with severe challenges in society where their challenges barred them from realizing their lives. Its specific sections elucidate the specific undertakings regarded to be helpful in enhancing independent living.

In *section two of the Rehabilitation Act*, its purpose is clearly defined: the government will have a statutory obligation in implementing projects for advancing rehabilitation services to meet the present and future needs of the handicapped in America (Button & Applequist, 2008). It also stipulates that the services provided will need to distribute benefits to the target group with a high preference for the individuals with severe challenges. Section two also provides that studies be initiated to identify methods of delivering beneficial rehabilitation services to encourage independence and self-sufficiency. Programs associated with the agenda of the Rehabilitation Act will also invest in the construction and improvement of rehab centers. Moreover, the section provides a statutory basis for the provision of employment opportunities for the handicapped in public and private sectors and the imperative to place the individuals on jobs. The acts also provide the basis for programs to initiate and administer pilot assistance projects aimed at equipping handicapped individuals with important skills in meeting their needs. It provides such programs with the legal basis to train personnel in facilities as a strategic approach to optimizing assistance to the handicapped.

Finally, section two provides room for review for transportation challenges facing the disabled and provides room for rehabilitation programs to expand and increase efficiency in elimination such barriers. It also provides leaders of the programs with proposals to advance projects supporting rehabilitation. *The Rehabilitation Act sections three to seven* provides a clear outline of the administration and funding for the respective programs from the federal



government and the private sector (Heilbronner, 2011). The act prioritizes key interventions aimed to enhance independent living for disabled individuals. It provides extensive coverage for rehabilitation services in education, health, social security health insurance and in the corporate sector. The rehabilitation sector focuses on ensuring the handicapped citizens have access to and benefit from services aimed at expanding their self-reliability. It provides a clear basis for legal programs and administrative obligations in actualizing independence irrespective of their challenges in society. Moreover, elements of non-discriminations, equitable employment, assistive support through rehabilitations centers and protection of their civil rights optimize their opportunities to independent living.

### **PL 101-336: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.**

*The America with Disabilities Act (ADA)* passed in 1990 focuses on limiting discrimination in both private and public sectors for citizens with disabilities in America (Heilbronner, 2011). It focuses on ensuring the disabled benefit from and have access to the same civil rights as ordinary people. The law was passed in response to alarming reports of discrimination facing individuals with disabilities.

The definitions for disabilities according to ADA include individuals with physical challenges, those suffering from AIDS, those with cosmetic disfigurements or even those facing substance abuse who have accomplished rehabilitation programs. Such individuals are exposed to discrimination in the social and corporate arena is, hence limiting their independence. ADA, as such, focuses on eliminating such discrimination by legally granting the disabled rights and opportunities to access and benefit from federal and private sector programs. ADA rules affect all sectors: public and private, employers, locomotive (transportation) programs and any other accommodations delivering services to the public. It aims to ensure zero discrimination in service delivery to the disabled (Heilbronner, 2011). Its major concepts include employment, telecommunication, transportation, and public accommodation. Under employment caps, ADA demands equal opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities. It discourages discrimination in opportunities to work and at work based on disability. The rule demands employers, in both private and private sectors, to have inclusion policies to cater to the disabled.

The employment concept intends to offer the disabled opportunities to actualize their skills comfortably in the corporate arena. ADA also demands employers to make work opportunities accommodative for the disabled employees. The accommodation element requires the employers to comfortably adjust the working environment to render it effective for employees with disabilities. ADA requires employers to make sure their disabled employees have supportive tools necessary to boost their work performance. In government services and transportation services, ADA requires that the involved parties ensure null discrimination and, as such, make the same services available to all, including those with disabilities (Heilbronner, 2011). ADA requires transportation systems to ensure nil discrimination by ensuring that the respective facilities have the capacity to meet the needs of the disabled. It requires all bus and rail transportation facilities to have wheelchair accessibility. This provision aims to ensure that the disabled are capacitated to utilize transportation services. As such, all entities offering public transportation

services need to conform to the stipulated requirements by ADA. The act also ensures individuals whom cannot use fixed facilities of transportation have access to transport services.

Also, the ADA act demands provision of alternative transportation services in case the service transportation initiatives do not provide accessibility to the disabled. In line with creating facilities that accommodate individuals with disabilities, ADA requires public accommodation places the for sale and purchase of goods and services to be typically accessible to all people (Heilbronner, 2011). Places that offer products to the public ought to have wheelchair accessibility as per the requirements of ADA. The involved entities ought, by law, to make such places accessible with no physical barriers at an essential cost element. Making such places available to the disable should, however, not be too expensive for the providers. Targeted places by ADA include restaurants, banks, hospitals, stores, and recreational facilities. Also, new construction made after the law are expected to have all necessary tools and set up required to make them accessible. Major highlighted tools to enhance accessibility by all include Brail, translators, and assistance personnel for individuals with disabilities. Telecommunication operators are also required to provide relay services to ensure all beneficiaries have access to their services. Collectively, ADA prohibits retaliation to individuals as they seek to exercise their rights as given by civil rights and by the act itself.

### **The Laws and Policy Related to Assistive Technology Concerning Independent Living for People with Disabilities**

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), as a member of the Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT), has been working collaboratively with other stakeholders to ensure that regulations are in place to assist people with disabilities who want to have better access to changing high-speed broadband, wireless, and various Internet-based technologies. Therefore, the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) has been instrumental in this work by updating the Communications Act and realizing the provisions that are included within the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act. The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) continues to observe, offer, and support laws that can enable people who have disabilities to experience improved access to emerging technology (VCIL, 2016). There are 54% of adults living with disabilities who use the internet in comparison to 81% of those adults without disabilities. In addition, 41% of those adults living with disabilities can access broadband at home, in comparison to 69% of those without disabilities (VCIL, 2016). Hence, the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) promotes positive change for people with disabilities in many technology areas that include:

- A. Connection on to medical services usable wireless devices
- B. Accessing the AAPD Internet website
- C. Providing affordable telecommunications products and services
- D. Accessing health information technologies and systems
- E. Accessing and using interfaces within consumer electronics products
- F. Assistive and adaptive technology
- G. Closed captioning
- H. Video description

- I. Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) that help people who have hearing and speech disabilities (VCIL, 2016).

Within this context, there are a number of federal laws relating to technology accessibility for people with disabilities (VCIL, 2016). Such laws include the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Communications Act, and the Rehabilitation Act. In addition, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities has various provisions related to access to technology. The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) supports the availability and usage of inexpensive Internet technologies and telecommunication devices as well as a determined enforcement of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act and the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act.

On 8th October 2010 the United States government enacted the *21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act* that ensures that people with disabilities do not remain behind as the world moves to the next era of Internet and digital communications and that such people also have equal access to emerging communications technologies (VCIL, 2016). Hence, the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act has been a key step forward to enhance accessibility, the usage and affordability of broadband Internet technologies for people who have disabilities. The law appraises the Communications Act and stresses safeguards in areas like communications that cover the access to emerging telephone expertise, text messaging, and broadband internet. It also encompasses video programming that emphasizes increasing availability of closed captioning as well as video description. This also implies improved accessibility to programming devices and guides as well as Internet and digital expertise.

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is also working towards appropriate implementation of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act by checking proposed regulations and remarking suitably. Generally, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act demands admittance to electronic and information technology acquired by Federal agencies. The U.S. Access Board has developed accessibility standards that cover a number of technologies within the law. The standards are also incorporated within the Federal government's procurement regulations. The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) ensures that standards as contained within the federal procurement procedures also cater to the needs of people with various forms of disabilities. Generally, the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is a representative member within the Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee (TEITAC) that was founded by the Access Board to offer advice on standards and guidelines. The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with *Disabilities Act of 1988* and the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 replaced the 1988 legislation and defines an assistive technology device as any item, piece of equipment, or product system, commercially acquired, improved, or customized, and used in increasing, maintaining, or improving the functional capabilities of people with disabilities (VCIL, 2016). This extremely broad policy definition is interpreted as covering a very big range of products including Velcro as well as microwave ovens. These can be used by people with disabilities, although they are not explicitly designed or improved to assist them. The wide statutory language was deliberately permitted so that the information and funding programs developed by such law can also cover the general use of normal products in cases where, for a given person, this product was seen to work as well or better than a specifically designed product.

Generally, there are other provisions like the environmental modifications that may include the widening of bathroom doorways, although this is not clearly covered within the Assistive Technology Act. However, equipment like grab bars that have been installed during modifications is covered. In addition, building modifications, often called fixed assistive technology, may not completely involve equipment installations.

Assistive technologies are often subdivided in order to differentiate the various kinds of products. For example, the personal assistive devices including canes, hearing aids and scooters, as well as magnifying glasses are essentially used to extend the person's physical capacities. These will move with a person wherever he or she goes. However, adaptive assistive devices are the equipment that ensures that an inaccessible conventional or general use device can be used by a person with disability, though this is made possible at additional cost. A typical example here would be the computer screen reader that enables people who are visually impaired to hear what is being displayed on a computer screen, like, for instance, text documents. To operate successfully under these assistive technology devices, the computer screen readers are required to have a suitable design to enable those people who are visually impaired to detect what is appearing on the screen. Other models of adaptive assistive technologies include hand controls that can be used to operate deceleration and acceleration systems within automobiles. Certain assistive technologies also qualify to be under durable medical equipment provisions and are covered within the Medicare statute and regulations. These technologies have been known to withstand recurrent usage, and are mainly and customarily used within the medical field. However, the technologies are generally not useful to people who do not have a specific illness or injury but can be suitably used in the home. The Medicare statute covers other categories of assistive products like prosthetics and orthotics. In general, insurance plans may not cover assistive technologies since they are widely defined within the Assistive Technology Act.

However, in certain circumstances, health plans can pay for a more expensive assistive technology even though a less expensive conventional technology would serve the purpose. Among children, assistive devices like adaptable or specifically designed toys meant not just for entertainment but also to contribute to the children's physical and emotional development are also covered within this provision. Generally, the continued implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act focuses attention on a variety of educational assistive technologies to help children who have disabilities. These technologies can also help adults who have learning or cognitive limitations by enhancing their ability to live, work and even participate fully and independently in community life.

Examples of cognitive assistive technologies include visually or auditory stimulating devices that offer simple prompts to assist people with disabilities to perform a task like preparing food or remembering things that they are required to do like taking prescribed medications. This also includes alarm devices needed by people to assist individuals with disabilities — although caregivers must take precaution when using these devices because someone with dementia or a similar cognitive condition can be endangered. More assistive technology devices that use tracking with the help of Global Positioning System technology are also useful in helping to determine the location of a person with disabilities, beyond the well-known use of simplified versions of e-mail. Generally, even though this assistive technology enabled devices are very expensive and may be out of reach for most potential beneficiaries, an assortment of these emerging assistive technologies continues to be developed, and they take advantage of advancements within the electronics and computing world, increasing the power that has inspired innovation

throughout the economy. Some examples of such technologies are the communications devices that can track a person with disabilities' eye movement and are typically used with people who have severe speech and movement impairments that may be the result of a stroke. Others within this category include complex prosthetic devices that can react to neural impulses and stair-climbing wheelchairs.

#### **PL 108-364: The Assistive Technology (AT) Act of 2004.**

*The Initial Assistive Technology Act of 1998* focused on advancing people with disabilities' freedom to enjoy independency and self-reliance by providing and making technological devices available to all the disabled in society (Sweeney & Zellner, 2008). The act was amended in 2004 to ensure optimization of its purpose. The AT Act was based on the goal of restoring independent living opportunities to millions of Americans living with disabilities. It was motivated by the fact that technology plays an important role in society; activities aided by technology could be applied to aid individuals with disabilities regain their freedom. The AT also aims to ensure that individuals with disabilities are aware of and have access to assistive devices. It also ensures that their families, guardians, or representatives can access and acquire assistive technology devices on their behalf. Moreover, the act defines the various norms by which the federal government participates in ensuring the disabled group benefits from assistive technology. Under AT acts, devices referred to as assistive have a direct impact in eliminating or decreasing the challenges associated with the disability being addressed. For instance, the use of devices that limit locomotion challenges is referred as AT under the Act (Sweeney & Zellner, 2008). As such, AT devices varies widely with the key purpose of enhancing independent living for the disabled. For instance, assistive devices for transportation include both manual and electric wheelchairs. They aid individuals with physical locomotive challenges reach destinations, public access places and meet their friends with either minimal or no assistance from other people. Other locomotive AD devices include walkers, scooters, and cranes. Communication devices which enhance hearing, speech recognition and voice amplifiers are also a set of AT devices for individuals with hearing challenges. Other accessibility AD devices and interventions include undertakings initiated to ensure accommodative capacities in meeting needs of the disabled. For instance, using lever doorknobs, grab bars, walk cranes, ramps, and audio-visual smoke detectors enhance the optimization of technology in adding value to the life and experiences of the disabled. Moreover, special equipment could enhance AD objectives. Such equipment includes the provision of accommodative packages for the challenged at work. For example, providing enlarged keyboards and voice recognition devices makes working environments suitable for employees with disabilities. Accessibility modification such as the use of speaker systems and visual techs in public domains such as in transportation and shopping malls aid the disabled.

The AD act focuses on government interventions in making such assistive devices available to all individuals with disabilities (Staff, 2008). The government, by law, has set budgets and provisions for assistive technology in every state. Such provisions use a grant approach to the distribution of funds and provide assistive devices to selected individuals throughout their life. The law ensures that such individuals acquire new experience in enhancing the quality of their daily lives. In a similar manner, the federal government provides special need devices for various persons to ensure optimal self-reliance. The government, moreover, provides assistive devices to enhance these people's opportunities for education and employment. Again, the state enforces other important legal provisions to AT by not only selecting and providing such devices, but also by customizing and repairing them for optimal usage. In

addition, the government offers to provide therapies to the disabled, such as occupational therapy, to add value to the provision of AT devices. Furthermore, it offers technical training to the AT beneficiaries for the disabled and their families, relatives, guardians, caregivers on how to optimize the productivity of the AT devices. It also provides technical support and training to employers and AT manufacturers as a legal obligation to advance value associated with utilization of assistive technologies.

According to, CEC standards, Initial Preparation Standard 2: Learning Environments-IGC.2. S2 Use and maintain assistive technologies, Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. S7 Use appropriate adaptations and technology for all individuals with exceptionalities, Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. S25 Select, design, and use technology, materials, and resources required to educate individuals whose exceptionalities interfere with communication, providing individuals with disabilities with technical devices to assist them actualizes the concept of independent living is crucial. Assistive technology tools and equipment fill in the gaps opened by disability among societal members (Staff, 2008). As such, they complement individuals and give them the ability to do daily activities by themselves. They unburden themselves from daily caregivers, and they are capacitated to work and attend to events of their interest. They make people with disabilities independent. As such, assistive technology has significantly influenced independent living.

### **Assistive Technology in Higher Education**

ADA, IDEA, and AT affect the higher education system support for students with disabilities (Sweeney & Zellner, 2008). Though higher education centers can be private or public, benefiting or not benefiting from federal funds, the existing rules have an impact in their educational service delivery, for all public universities and any other private higher education center receiving funds from the federal government has the obligation to provide students with disabilities with AT. As such, the students have the right to AT and can sue for such facilities. The privilege grants them the opportunity to pursue academic goals in a similar manner to students without disabilities. Moreover, educational benefits ought to be offered to all students without discrimination by disability. IDEA and ADA protect the educational rights of students with disabilities at higher education and demands that educational centers offer both AT facilities or tools and an accommodative environment for all students. In higher learning, students are typically protected from discrimination in various ways. First, eligibility criteria used to participate in academic, co-curricular or any other activity in the center ought not to restrict students with disabilities. Also, admission conditions should be objective, accommodating all students irrespective of their disabilities. Failure to ensure access to benefits for students without disabilities is also a form of discrimination. Limitation of program or service benefits for students with disabilities also amounts to discrimination. Collectively, at the higher education level, students ought to have equal educational benefits irrespective of disability. Special need students ought to be provided with assistive technology devices and facilities to ensure equitable program benefits. Students should also be protected from discrimination by their disabilities.

### **The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.**



*The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12101)* can be seen as a labor law that forbids any form of discrimination against people with disabilities. It gives comparable protections against discrimination for Americans with disabilities to those in the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* that forbade discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, nationality among other characteristics. In addition to but unlike the Civil Rights Act, the ADA compels employers to provide reasonable accommodations to those employees who have disabilities, and it also enforces accessibility requirements on public housing. The National Council on Disability in 1986 recommended the enactment of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) while drafting the first version of the bill that was presented in the House and Senate in 1988. The final version of the bill was signed on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1990 by President George H. W. Bush, with changes to the bill that took effect on January 1, 2009.

### **The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008.**

*The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-325, ADAAA)* is an Act of Congress that was affected on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009, following the amended Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and additional disability nondiscrimination laws at the federal level of the United States (Division, C. R., & Rights, D. 2016). After passing on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and being signed into law by President George W. Bush on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008, the ADAAA became the response to various Supreme Court decisions that interpreted the original text of the ADA. Since the U.S. Congress regarded those decisions to be restrictive to the rights of persons with disabilities, the ADAAA successfully overturned those decisions by changing the law. It also prohibited parts of the regulations that were published by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) interpreting Title I and especially the employment part related to the Title of the ADA (EEOC, 1973). Therefore, ADAAA includes changes on the description of the term "disability" to clarify and expand the definition. This implies that there is a bigger number and type of people protected by the ADA and other federal disability nondiscrimination laws. This law was created to highlight the needs of the employer and employee with disabilities.

### **The Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004 and 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301.**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) represents a four-piece legislation that enables students who have a disability to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), a package that is customized to their individual needs (AFB, 2016). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was initially called the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) between 1975 and 1990. In 1990, the United States Congress re-authorized EHA and changed its title to *IDEA (Public Law No. 94-142)*. Generally, the goal of IDEA is to offer children with disabilities similar opportunities in education to those students who have no disability. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) includes four parts, the main two parts being A and B. *Part A* highlights the common provisions of the law; *Part B* looks at assistance as far as education for all children with disabilities is concerned. *Part C* encompasses infants and toddlers that have disabilities and includes children from ages zero (at



birth) to age three. *Part D* covers the national support programs directed at the federal level. Every part of this law has remained the same ever since it was first enacted in 1975 (AFB, 2016).

IDEA consists of six key elements that highlight its main points. The six key elements include the Individualized Education Program (IEP), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Appropriate Evaluation, Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Parent and Teacher Participation, and Procedural Safeguards. Accompanying those six key elements are certain important modules integrating within IDEA (AFB, 2016). These modules focus on the confidentiality of information, transition services, and discipline.

Generally, persons with disabilities in the US are provided for by various laws and policies to enable them to live independently. The various laws and policies highlighted in this paper reveal a deliberate framework by both the federal and state governments to ensure that people with disabilities can live independently. However, one final reflection on the available laws and policies reveals that it takes considerable effort by those for whom these laws and policies have been made to fully benefit from these protections. In other words, it is not enough that the people with disabilities have an awareness that such laws and policies exist, but what also matters is that they can take advantage of the provisions therein and be able to accomplish independent living. This where the burden remains because it is not enough for a person with disabilities to know what is expected of his or her employer; the employer must be willing to contribute to a situation that is within the stipulations so that such a person can fully and actively participate in the working environment. The extent to which these laws and policies have been enacted and implemented is very intentional and yet hiccups to full implementation will remain as long as everyone involved is not making serious consideration of the implications of these laws and policies

*PL 108-446: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA)*, the improvement act focused on revising both *parts A and B* of the educational needs of the children with disabilities (Lowe, Reynolds & Applequist, 2008), amended the definition for children with disability to refer to all children between three and nine years of age experiencing developmental challenges or delays. Also, children with sight and hearing problems under the acts are considered to be disabled, hence they are considered in need of special education. The act also stipulates the concepts of the highly-qualified teacher, limited proficiency in English and the core academic subject surrounding Local Education Agency (LEA), *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* and the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA)*. Collectively, IDEA focuses on making education available to all by ensuring statewide coverage for the educational needs of the disabled children.

IDEA plays a strategic role in minimizing paperwork and non-instructional time constraints, which do not add value to the learning efforts of children with disabilities (Lowe, Reynolds & Applequist, 2008). It also provides children with disabilities the right to receive proper education in addition to waivers made to enhance the educational and functional performance of children with disabilities. The act also provides a guideline on allotment of federal funding support for the education of the disabled children. The Act also provides a formula used to allocate funds for various purposes in special education programs for children with disabilities. The acts also require states to reserve significant amounts of that that could be used to meet special needs for children with complicated disabilities. Under the Highly Qualified Teacher section, the act dictates that teachers for special education must be ascertained

professionals with licensure in the service provision. In a similar manner, they are expected to have and exhibit high performance conforming to the needs of the children. Moreover, they must have all requirements as provided by NCLBA (Lowe, Reynolds & Applequist, 2008). The regulation of teachers who offer special education aims to ensure that the children with disabilities benefit from programs generated to boost their educational goals. Regarding opportunities for professional development, the law requires pooled resources to be used entirely to mentor teachers, encourage curriculum development, and develop programs aimed to improve the quality education for the children with special needs. Training on professional educational plans is also among the law requirements. The act mandates educators to set short term objectives achievable for the children with disabilities. They are also required by law to provide the parents or guardians with periodic reports on the progress of the children. Again, the law requires early intervention for toddlers, preschool, and elementary education levels as an approach to providing education to all. Collectively, the act prospers the objective of “Education for All.”

### **34 CFR Parts 300 and 301 – Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disability.**

This provision in the Department of Education focuses on enhancing educational achievements among children with disabilities (Fish, 2011). Its main agenda involves funding geared towards ensuring that every child, irrespective of the physical or developmental challenge, has access to education. It is mainly focused on funding states via grants so that they can increase the special education for the disabled children. The act also shares the same objectives as the IDEA platform and focuses on enhancing special personnel development. Moreover, 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301, with the removal of 301, led to more objectivity in advancing their special education motives. The amendments made for IDEA, NCLBA and LEA motivate massive inclusion and foster education for all with zero discrimination. Collectively, the IDEA law in America provides an intensive platform to embrace and grow educational objectives for all children irrespective of their developmental challenges. Providing children with disabilities access to education, and especially from a young age, defines the basis of independent living. It equips them with the life skills they need to actualize self-reliance. In a similar manner, it prepares them for everyday activities and expectations set in school create a foundation for success. Moreover, education is the key to achievements in both personal and corporate environments.

### **The Fair Housing Act.**

The fair housing act protects the rights of all individual wanting to buy, sell, or utilize a service such as a mortgage from discrimination by color, race, wealth or even handicap (Jonggyun, 2009). People with disabilities as defined and provided by ADA are protected by the Fair Housing Act as well. It is, therefore, considered illegal and a violation of rights to deny people with disabilities to ability to rent, sell or acquire mortgages with the intention to meet their housing needs. The law also allows people with disabilities to use assistive animals in their premises, whether rented or otherwise. They have the right to do since they have a legal provision to increase their self-reliance in society. The fair housing law was created to both protect and provide individuals with disabilities the freedom to realize a normal life. The law also allows occupiers of rented and leased properties the right to modify the residence to meet their

needs. The modification undertakings need to be justified and in line with the needs of the disabled occupant. In the case of violation of civil rights, the harmed individuals with a disability have the right to file for complaint and seek justice (Jonggyun, 2009). The use of coercion, fear, or threats with regard to people with disabilities as a plan to prevent them from advancing their interests in buying or renting premises amounts to a violation of their civil rights. Moreover, developing a property for public use requires the building to have accessibility for all individuals. Such buildings ought to ease accessibility of transportation and telecommunication. Laws under fair housing also provide awareness stipulations for these rights pertaining to individuals with disabilities. Collectively, the Fair Housing Act acts as a shield to disabled individuals' civil rights. It enhances independent living among its members of society.

### **The Role of Transition Services in Independent Living for People with Disabilities- – key issue with IDEA and adult life goals related to independent living:**

1990 was the first time that it was required by law to include a transition statement in a child's IEP. A lot is being done to ensure that the transition service is effective to prepare a person with disabilities to have an independent life. According to CEC Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. S27: Design and implement instructional programs that address independent living and career education for individuals, learners with disabilities must be able to transition from primary to secondary and into higher education, culminating in a transition to independent living without any discrimination.

Moreover, IDEA 2004 defines this process as

A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:

- (A) is designed to be a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
- (B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests;

(C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

The transition phase has an essential and significant role in securing independent living. It is a substantial part of helping a person with a disability to get ready for their future life. It should be known that OCR imposes Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II) that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. This is a very strong sanctioning to support transition services and any institution that wants to be accredited. Although there are other considerations that go into ensuring that

such an institution is accredited, by the fact that the laws are available to support this course, the transition service will play a greater role in future even as more institutions come on board (Trainor, 2008). Since accredited institutions sometimes require that a learner with disability officially request academic adjustments that suit the needs of such a learner, there is some form of evaluation that must be undertaken at this point to determine the degree of adjustments to be made (Hogansen, et.al, 2008).

According to, CEC standard Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies-IGC.5. K9 Model career, vocational, and transition programs for individuals with exceptionalities, the government should step in and offer such evaluation in just the same way that it does at the primary level. While the prospective learner often pays for such services, this sometimes affects the way that learners with disabilities transition to different levels of learning. In cases where the cost of taking an evaluation is prohibitive, there may be situation where learners may be hindered from attaining their academic objectives.

Therefore, according to Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies - IGC.5. S8 Resources and techniques used to transition individuals with exceptionalities into and out of school and in postschool environments, transition services can be made more inclusive and procure funding by the state just as is the case with the primary education evaluation process. However, this may need further funding and more special education professionals.

According to Initial Preparation Standard 7: Collaboration- IGC.7. S4 Collaborate with team members to plan transition to adulthood that encourages full community participation, transition services must be effective. The fact that students with disabilities who want to move to secondary or post-secondary educational settings need re-evaluation and the fact that they must meet the cost of these re-evaluation may sometimes be prohibitive and, as such, cause some of the students to fail to get to the desired level of education. Generally, it is important that such an evaluation is carried out so that characteristic adjustments can be made for the transiting student. While IEPs may be of some help, nonetheless for those students who are over 21 years old, basing transition needs on their IEP may not be adequate. Perhaps increasing funding to transition agencies to enable these students to make their transition would be fruitful.

### **The Importance of Self-Determination Skills to Secure Independent Living**

According to *Initial Preparation Standard 2: Learning Environments-IGC.2. S5 Use skills in problem solving and conflict resolution*, *Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies- IGC.5. S28 Design and implement curriculum and instructional strategies for medical self-management procedures*, *Initial Preparation Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences- IGC.1. K4 Psychological and social-emotional characteristics of individuals with exceptionalities*, *Initial Preparation Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences- IGC.1. K11 Communication and social interaction alternatives for individuals who are nonspeaking*, *Initial Preparation Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences-*

IGC.1. S1 Relate levels of support to the needs of the individual, *Initial Preparation Standard 2: Learning Environments*- IGC.2. S4 Teach individuals with exceptionalities to give and receive meaningful feedback from peers and adults, *Initial Preparation Standard 7: Collaboration*-IGC.7. S2 Select, plan, and coordinate activities of related services personnel to maximize direct instruction for individuals with exceptionalities, *Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies*- IGC.5. S29 Design, implement, and evaluate instructional programs that enhance social participation across environments, *Initial Preparation Standard 4: Assessment*-IGC.4. S1 Implement procedures for assessing and reporting both appropriate and problematic social behaviors of individuals with exceptionalities, *Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies* -IGC.5. S27 Design and implement instructional programs that address independent living and career education for individuals, *Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies*- IGC.5. S29 Design, implement, and evaluate instructional programs that enhance social participation across environments, the significance of self-determination skills for independent living phase is made clear. All these standers that have mentioned in the CEC standers have emphasized on the Self-determination skills to obtain independent living for individual with disability.

Self-determination concept is based on the simple assumption that human beings ought to be in a position to intrinsically influence their life outcomes (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). The concept as well avails people with the right to control positive life outcomes by managing the decisions and choices they make. Typically, the concept revolves around the approach of positive achievements through good decisions and choices. It is as well defined as a skill based on knowledge and belief aimed at enhancing a quality of life achievements, success, and goals actualization. Additionally, self-determination has been established a practical life skill vital to all age groups irrespective of physical, mental, or social status. Self-determination works a single system with various sub-elements influencing its overall contribution towards goal achievement. Moreover, the approach's subsystem alignment acts and contributes unitary towards achieving desirable outcome depending on the expectations of the involved parties. The approach is based on seven key pillars termed as the concepts of self-determination. Choice making is among its elementary concepts. An individual's ability defines the skill to select a choice from two (Ghobary, 2007). The concept is critical in outlining ruling between known options. Diversities in life may not only pose two options hence the need for decision-making skills. Decision skills allow an individual to select an option from more than two. The ability aids in outlining a single choice from various known options. It is a critical skill in enhancing positive living and goals actualization.

Additionally, decision making is also an inclusive approach in self-determination. It is crucial skill it involves the use of logic, from unknown to known. Decision making is primary in self-determination since it lays the basis of what an individual or a group intends to achieve. Decision making takes a procedural approach in deriving knows from unknowns. Again, the self-determination entails goals setting and attainment. The goals set represent the desirable state of affair in which individuals and groups focus on achieving over a specific duration. Goals act as a roadmap ant their achievement represents desirable state or success (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). Self-regulation also forms an integral element of the self-determination concepts. The skill allows an individual to observe, regulate and reinforce adopted efforts in achieving pre-established objectives. It is vital in enhancing intrinsic motivators to

success and dedication to achieving desirable outcomes. Self-advocacy as well plays a significant role in improving the outcomes associated with self-determination. It enhances one's ability to speak and protect the cause of person. Internal locus as well increases one's control of his/her actions. The skill works in hand with self-efficacy and efficacy expectations. Self-awareness and self-knowledge crown elements of self-determination. It aims at having the desirable know-how needed to attain own set goals. It is founded on establishing a framework of weaknesses and strengths and organizing them to enhance overall goals actualization.

### **Self-Determination Importance to Students with Disabilities**

Self-determination is significantly important to all people, irrespective of age, profession, or status (Hurley, 2010). However, its importance among children with disabilities tends to have more impact as compared to other social groups. Children with disabilities tend to receive a rejection or even experience self-denial. Various disabilities challenging students include developmental disorders (such as autism) and physical incapability. Such disabilities expose students to poor academic performance and limit their participation in co-curriculum activities. Collectively, they tend to have low self-esteem, continued poor performance and ended up not achieving their goals or meeting desirable expectations. Such experiences may result in advanced adverse effects such as self-denial, school dropping, and low self-esteem. However, acquisition of self-determination skills is vital in enhancing their ego, thinking, performance and objectives actualization.

Self-determination is essential in instilling students with disabilities with problem solving and decision-making skills (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). Such technical expertise aids them take control of their fate. It enables them actively to defend their propositions irrespective of their social or physical status. Self-determination equips them with full awareness of their rights, their disability and hence aids in orienting and organizing their efforts to meet expected goals/performance. Again, self-determination is vital in increasing their self-esteem. It provides them with full knowledge and a framework on how to behave, organize and plan for their success regardless of their challenging state. Studies have found that students with high self-determination register higher performance and association with others as opposed to those without.

Collectively, self-determination is critical for social and academic advancement among children with disabilities. The degree to which they acquire self-determination influences the overall quality of their life experiences as they interact and associate with other individuals in school and outside academic institutions.

### **Self-Determination Skills**

Fundamental skills for highly self-determined individuals reflect total actualization of the concept's elements. Individuals asserted as self-determined have outstanding decision-making skills (Hurley, 2010). They exhibit technicalities, professionalism and knowledge of the current challenge and its potential solution alternatives. In their procedural decision-making approaches, they provide insight for their skills in selecting an option from a few and even in making important choices. Such individuals as well have proficient solving skills. Irrespective of the nature of issues presented to them, they provide objective solutions. As well, they tend to have self-regulation and self-

management skills. In their overall undertakings, they claim responsibility for their respective actions. They exhibit to have a code of conduct that guides their actions.

Additionally, they have self-understanding skills. Most of them have full knowledge of their potentials, strengths, and weaknesses. Most important, they always have knowledge of their nature, with a total understanding of their rights. Again, self-determined people have goal setting skills. They ensure specificity, measurability, reliability, and timeliness elements are reflected in their goal setting efforts (Ghobary, 2007). Collectively, their skills match the seven elements of self-determination.

### **Characteristic of Self-Determined Persons**

Individuals who are ascertained to have outstanding self-determination skills need to reflect supporting characters. Acquisition of the desirable skills changes their personality and as such, they have specific characters deemed necessary to identify them. For instance, they have self-regulation and responsibility characters. Irrespective of situations and their action, they always claim responsibility for their actions. They do not embark on ‘pointing figures’ but often focus on creating solutions. Moreover, they reflect high creativity in their problem-solving efforts. They also show proficiency in separating choices, options and making informed decisions from a variety of alternatives. Considerably, self-determined individuals as well have the ability to distinguish wants from needs. The ability assists them in decision making, choice-making and in self-advocacy. Such individuals also have the tendency to have high profiles in problem-solving. Again, persistence and effective use of communication skills provide them with a ‘neutral ground’ in their goals setting and actualization. Their proficiency in communication plays a critical role in positioning their social and role-playing status.

Moreover, self-motivated individuals have self-regulation skills, and they exercise them to influence their behavior and actions. Practically, such people have self-regulatory behaviors (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). They remain comprehensively in control of their actions and remain monitored to their goals. Their high performance and dominance in life is a reflection of their confidence. Besides setting goals and objective, they focus and plan for their achievements. Collectively, their dedication through knowledge and self-confidence enhances their overall performance. Again, self-determined individuals are pro-active in nature. They always focus on creating courses of action as situations arise. Moreover, their dedication towards self-achievements is powered by optimization of resources and self-efficacy.

### **Interventions for Development of Self-Determination**

Self-determination is typically an enhanced behavior through the practice of its core elements (Katartzi & Vlachopoulos, 2011). Reflective interventions can be enacted at various stages of child’s development. Again, interventions can be implemented at home or school. The place of implementation for the responses provides increased opportunities for self-determination skills development among kids and students. Early childhood children can be provided with opportunities to make choices from easy decisions such as choice of food or clothes. For instance, parents and family members could ask their kids whether they would prefer one option to another such as



blue pants or black. Providing children with such options enhances their choice making skills. Again, family members could as well provide the kids with chances to make formative and constructive decisions. The approach just creates an environment in need of their decisions. Such instances may include time constraints or action-based gaps. Moreover, parents could provide children with model performance comparative opportunities. Such provisions allow kids to evaluate and compare their performances to that of a known model.

At elementary stages of development, families and teachers could provide children with more inclusive decision-making environments as compared to early childhood stage (Hurley, 2010). Comprehensive strategies include providing them with opportunities to with more than two challenges. Such constraints enhance their self-evaluation skills by providing similar changes such as work organization, structural play rules compliance. Again, parents could encourage 'loud thinking' as a strategic approach in increasing their self-determination. Comprehensively, at early elementary stages, relatives and teachers ought to prioritize their development skills to include self-determination concepts as they grow up. At late primary stages, parents and families could provide their children with comparative models with reflection on set goals and their actualization status. Moreover, comparison enhances systematic structure for goal setting and implementation of corrective undertakings to conform to desirable outcomes. Eventually, appropriate training at elementary levels prepares comprehensive environment at secondary stages of development. At secondary (advanced) stages of development, teachers and families could train their children and students to establish their strengths and weaknesses. The skill is rendered vital in self-determination development. Practical events include guidance and provision of opportunities to practice self-development skills.

### **Teachers' Guide to Self-Determination**

Schooling children spend most of their time with teachers at school as compared the duration spend at home. Schooling students can benefit massively from teachers support the acquisition of self-determination skills (Ghobary, 2007). As such, teachers have an essential role in supporting the acquisition of desirable skills. There are top twenty practices teachers can adopt to enhance acquisition of self-determination skills among students. First, teachers ought to determine the key issues and concerns motivating children. Understanding such issues ensure that they utilize the effective motivators in enhancing their behavior and administering useful skills. Again, they ought to align and prioritize children's interests and preferences. Such a provision provides teachers with an opportunity to create children intrinsic motivation by encouraging the practice of their preferences. Again, teachers ought to make the skill training and practice practical and real. Again, teachers could motivate casual-agency practices among their students. The method involves encouraging students to bear responsibility for their actions, options, and decisions (Katartzi & Vlachopoulos, 2011).

Another practice includes informative guidance to practical choice making. Instructing ensure the need and importance for decision preferences. Again, teachers could train broad application of the choice making in various activities of school days. Practically, various activities are undertaken in school. Therefore, the encouraging practice of the skill round the day enhances the skill acquisition and practice. Moreover, teachers could encourage active participation in learning content. Such chances improve confidence and motivation. Again, teachers could comprehensively determine and control children's emotions in the decision-making process. In a similar manner,

teachers could allow students to emotional regulate their contact. The opportunity enhances their self-regulation skills. As well, they could actively involve students in goals setting such as score targets and game wins.

Furthermore, teachers could train students to self-monitor their goals' actualization efforts. The undertaking includes focusing f self-dedication and concentrate on desirable outcomes (Hurley, 2010). Again, they could educate children on goal achievement without the promise of reward. Promising awards increase anxiety and may limit self-driven motivation. Teachers could as well design interventions to build self-determination skills. Again, teachers could learn with the students in learning self-determination skills. As well, they could enhance acquisition of communication skills since it is critical in self-determination. Moreover, teachers could include teenagers in practicing self-determination skills. Finally, teachers ought to include the students in choice and decision making and prioritizing their suggestions as an intrinsic motivator towards self-determination.

### **Current Practice of Self-Determination**

Today, the concept of self-determination has undergone various intrinsic and legal modifications. Practically, self-determination has a conceptual framework which guides its acquisition and practice among children and adults irrespective of developmental status. The framework considers all variable important in enhancing acquisition of self-determination skills (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). The first element revolves around intrinsic motivators (casual agency). The approach considers skills necessary in acquiring self-determination among children with challenges. Such skills include self-regulation, decision-making, goal setting and decision making. Typically, the casual agency approach creates self-discipline by enhancing independence. The approach allows individuals to make a decision based on their choices and depth of knowledge available and delivered. It is the most important component in self-determination since it advocates independence. Additionally, the second element of the framework involves dependency approaches in enhancing actualization of self-determination attributes (Katartzzi & Vlachopoulos, 2011). It renders leadership support vital in acquiring desirable skill and life outcomes.

Finally, the framework considers environmental opportunities essential to the development of self-determination characters and competencies. Environmental opportunities may include parental and educational support. Comprehensively, individuals and particularly children being trained on self-determination skills to need supportive assistance.

However, the law provides explicit support for self-determination especially regarding rights passage between parents and children (Ghobary, 2007). The law provides that after the age of eighteen, an individual has the right to choose and decision. Parental control and manipulation are legally influenced by age gaps hence limiting continued influence. Practically, the parents have the opportunity to enhance self-determination at early and elementary stages of development. Advocating for self-determination after 18-years of age may attract legal concerns. Ideally, the framework and modern modes of enhancing self-determination include use of technologically modified techniques, programs, and devices to enhance desirable skills such as self-regulation and decision-making. Standard practices utilized are computer and phone games providing the players with challenging scenarios which demand their choice, decision making and prioritization of needs and wants.

## **Child Preparation for Decision Making**

Children with disabilities practically face numerous challenges in their development stages (Hurley, 2010). If such challenging behaviors are not well handled and eliminated, they may extend into their adulthood. As such, parents have an important role in enhancing their decision-making skills. Training them proper decision making increases their self-regulation and independence at and after the age of maturity (18 years). The biggest role in parentage involves directive and constructive guidance for children to acquire lifetime skills deemed necessary for positive living. Parents can train children on decision making from early stages through their development until they reach their age of majority (Hurley, 2010). Elementary practices include involving them in purchasing decisions.

The approach ensures that the children weigh alternatives and make preference choices. Frequent involvement equips them with essential choice making skills which are critical in laying a foundation for effective decision making. Again, parents could involve children in decision-making discussions such holiday destination. The decision-making process exposure familiarizes children with important considerations such as evaluating possible alternatives. As well, the undertaking allows them to make and evaluate their suggestions. As well, parents could practice with their children on possible decision outcomes. In-depth scrutiny and analysis expose them to the realism of decision making in life. Also, their participation familiarizes them with the decision-making process.

Moreover, parents could encourage their children in developing IEP programs (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). Parents as well could assist them in developing proposals for the same programs. Active and inclusive participation enhance their grasp of decision-making skills. Furthermore, parents could encourage school personnel positive relationships. Typically, positive relationships with teachers increase their skill acquisitions. Teachers technically play a fundamental role in enhancing supportive skills development in students. As well, parents can remain objective with children training and development. Overprotection creates an undesirable environment for skills learning efforts.

## **Self-Determination for Children with Disabilities**

As argued earlier, children with disabilities have developmental challenges (Ghobary, 2007). As such, their teaching practices for self-determination demand for structural, simple, and easily remembered steps. Such phases need to be aligned to their particular needs. For instance, children with communication challenges require particularized assistance to incorporate desirable skills. Typically, teaching and coaching for children with disabilities attract massive dedication and customization of both parental and teachers' participation. Educators and parents ought to embark on participatory approaches in teaching children with disabilities on self-determination skills (Yailagh, 2014). Such approached include providing them with opportunities to participate in self-regulation, evaluation and in decision making. Active participation has been rendered effective in enhancing skills grasp for children with disabilities. Again, educators could train the students on regulating their behaviors and learning practices. Practically, teaching children's preferred topics and proposals increase their participation. The approach remains proficient in enhancing existing acquired skills such as processes or practices such as special game moves and rules. Teachers' as well could embrace awareness of students' strengths and weaknesses as a unique skill in self-

determination. Considerably, knowledge and outreach from primary pillar to self-determination. Additionally, school-based, and community-based approached could be used to teach and coach children with disabilities self-determination skills (Katartzis & Vlachopoulos, 2011). Community-based approached include the development of educative centers for children with special needs. Community approach ensures needs of the community segment of children with disabilities are met. On the other hand, school-based approaches include partnerships with teachers and parents to implement supportive activities enhancing coaching for self-determination skills. Workshops and seminars are among most reliable partnership programs advancing acquisition of desirable skills such as persistence, confidence, and decision-making.

### **Family Roles in Teaching Self-Determination**

Typically, families have the essential part of coaching children on how to be self-determined irrespective of their disabilities (Hurley, 2010). Parents and the entire family interact with their children before their go for school or even join caregiving institutions. Upon realization of developmental challenges, parents can implement various home-made and professional practices to encourage the development of self-development skills among their children. Initially, families can create awareness of the children developmental challenges as an efficient and strategic way of creating a friendly environment for further teaching and training efforts. Ensuring children and other family members interacting with the physically challenged children are aware of their status increases proper handling and efficient interaction. Awareness enhances acceptance and commitment towards training for desired skills. Families as well could create an opportunistic environment for acquiring self-determination skills such as choice-making, decision-making, self-regulation, and confidence. Provision of such environment includes the provision of support. Providing resources for training and teaching such a device, games and supportive books are primary practices which could aid enhance acquisition of self-determination skills. Again, families can provide them with decision-making opportunities (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013).

Typically, decision making is a comprehensive skill in demand for continuous involvement. Families could involve children in primary and frequent decision making such as choosing plays, food, clothes, color choices and in recreational activates. Continued active involvement equips them with both familiarity and experience in decision making. Such undertakings also enhance their choice-making skills. Comprehensively, families need to avail opportunities aiding acquisition of self-determination skills. Families can as well dedicate their children to training institutions where they are given considerable attention and exposed to professional training on self-determination (Hurley, 2010). As well, parents can provide children and particularly at the age of maturity with the opportunity to exercise decision making irrespective of the outcomes (Yailagh, 2014). Though decision making may result in mistakes and undesirable results, giving children the chance to makes decisions and claim responsibility enhances their self-determination skills and behavior. Additionally, families can improve self-determination skills acquisition through exploration. Research allows the practice of freedom, self-evaluation, and self-regulation. The experience is vital in providing guidance, experience and determination of do's and don'ts. It as well plays a primary role in advancing the practice of acquired self-determination skills.

### **Key Points for Consideration in Self-Determination**

Practically, the concept of self-determination does not revolve around the seven components termed essential in its acquisition and particularly among children with disabilities. Self-determination has key points that ought not to be confused with its seven pillars. For instance, one major point revolves around independence. Self-determination typically involves one's ability to remain independent in decision making, behavior and all undertakings (Ghobary, 2007). It refers to the capacity to act solely out of awareness, understanding of actions and claim of responsibility. Independence in reason and activities is considered the most important element in children and adults. In a similar manner, self-determination removes the concept of dependency, unreliability, and understanding of own courses of actions. Relatively, the casual agency remains a critical concept of self-determination. Moreover, self-determination is a developmental skill. Its concepts are acquired differently at various life intervals as one grows (Hurley, 2010). Families and educators should be aware of the different skills needs at specific developmental stages. As such, self-determination teaching and training ought to be initialized early stages from the age of two as a strategic approach to advancing the skills grasp before they attain the age of maturity. At every phase, various methods equivalent to their mental capacity should be used to support developmental balance and practice of essential self-determination skills. Implementation of appropriate teaching and training ensures that children acquire the ability even before the attained age of maturity. As well, the responsibility to teach children with disability on self-determination is not only for teachers, educators, caregivers but also parents. Parental and family support plays a significant role in ensuring they acquire desirable independence skills with a full understanding of their challenges, strengths, and potentials.

### **Promoting Self-Determination**

Promoting self-determination is a critical undertaking for children with developmental challenges (Goodman, Bains & Moussalli, 2010). Due to the nature of their behaviors, challenges posed and association difficulties, promoting self-determination among them remains a potential obstacle. Family and teachers' efforts may not deliver desirable outcome hence supporting self-determination often call for the services of paraprofessionals. They are individuals (mainly school staff) who have expertise in handling and coaching students with disabilities. They are also known as special education assistants. Typically, they spend significant time with children in school mainly coaching them on critical self-determination skills. School administrations, teachers, and parents ought to collaborate and support utilization of paraprofessionals' skills in schools with children with disabilities. Their services are effective in coaching students on the practical application of the seven core skills of self-determination. Special education assistants primarily focus on training on the skills, knowledge and positive attitude geared towards self-control of the life activities (Yailagh, 2014). They aim to administer self-determination skills. As such, utilizing their services mark sufficient efforts geared toward the promotion of self-determination among children with developmental challenges. Conventionally, development of self-determination demands initialization of educational and supportive initiatives. Educators, parents, and administrators ought to manifest massive interest in supporting children with disabilities. Teaching them self-determination skills is the foundation of their educational and life goals.

### **The Seven Aspects of Self-Determination**

Typically, self-determination is a combination of seven core aspects determined as essential for acquisition of the overall skill (Ghobary, 2007). The seven aspects of self-determination communally and individually play important

roles in enhancing outcomes of individual life activities. As such, they cannot be separated from the paradigm of self-determination. For an individual to be ascertained as self-determined, he/she must have the seven aspects of self-determination. Choice making is the most primary aspect. It refers to the ability to choose from two known options. Typically, the skill is taught from early childhood stages. Parents may present such opportunities to them for them to make their preferred choices. The second aspect is decision making. It is a more comprehensive skill as compared to choice making since it demands selection of an option from several known options. It attracts concepts of alternatives comparison. It is mainly taught at elementary childhood levels at the age of three and four. Decision making is procedural and may be challenging to grasp. However, it is a vital skill in education and outside school activities.

The third aspect is problem solving. It is essential skill applied at every level of development until adulthood. It creates an element of comparison and consequences of various outcomes of a choice or an alternative. Fourth, self-determination attracts goal-setting and attainment skills. Individuals ought to be able to establish goals and work towards their achievement. The skill plays a significant role in enhancing their educational and job performances (Ghobary, 2007). The fifth aspect is self-advocacy and leadership. It is the ability to have control over own actions. The skill is vital in upholding affirmative measures and declining undesirable practices, either in school or outside the school environment. Self-regulation and management mark the sixth aspect. It entails central management of own behavior and actions. It is geared towards right and positive actions. Finally, the last issue is self-awareness and knowledge. Eventually, children with disabilities will have optimal opportunities to embrace their life activities if they understand their challenges and are aware of its constraints. Hence, possessing the right knowledge and skills foster their positive and productive life activities.

### **Choice-Making Skills**

The collective choice-making skill refers to the ability to choose or demonstrates preference (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). Establishing a choice as well demand provision of two or more options. Preference i.e. choice-making is vital in both developmental and educational needs particularly among children with disabilities. From morning to midday, children make various choices. For instance, they will determine where, when and what to play. The breakfast to take, clothes to wear and even writing and drawing materials to use involve choice-making. Choice-making as such is inevitable and children with disabilities need to have proficiency in making relating choices. Practically, choice-making is an establishment of preferences. The skill equips the students with the decision-oriented approach in deciding the activity to undertake.

Teachers and families, however, play a significant role in enhancing the development of the skill (Goodman, Bains & Moussalli, 2010). Their action dictates whether the skill is easily acquired and practiced or manipulated. For instance, granting children with disabilities opportunities to choose which game to play, where to play it and what time to play enhances their choice-making skills. To the contrary, making such decisions for them limits the skill grasp. Eventually, choice making has practical application in classrooms and the entire school environment. Proficiency in decision making increases their behavior response. Studies have established that child who is included and in control of choice-making exhibit minimal behavior challenges. The reason attributed to the outcome is



associated with preference and environment control. When they are allowed to make choices, they are intrinsically motivated to participate hence actively overcoming their challenging behaviors.

### **Decision-Making Strategies**

Educators have an important role in enhancing grasp of choice-making skills among children with disabilities. Allowing students to choose learning activities provides them with the opportunity to improve their choice-making skills (Ghobary, 2007). For instance, educators could request students to choose among various content delivery methods such as oral presentation, skits, or computer-generated reports. Their active individual participation in selecting either of the methods enhances their overall skill acquisition. Moreover, utilizing their preferred mode of content or report delivery increases their intrinsic motivation towards set (desirable) goals. In a different dimension, educators could allow students to choose research topics and materials to use. Typically, research questions and project content affect their choice making skills. Since the field (research) provides them with multiple options, providing them with the opportunity to choose their topic and general materials increases their skill in deriving an option from a few.

Additionally, teachers could provide children with the freedom of choosing the place of activity (Goodman, Bains & Moussalli, 2010). For instance, when undertaking a drawing project, teachers could allow students to choose where to take their projects. Possible locations include the desk, on the ground or the class's board. Of the possible location, the results of either utilization vary. As such, allowing them to use either equips them with choice-making skills in selecting most effective and appropriate location. The same case applies to plays. Teachers could allow children to decide where they undertake their games, either in the open ground, in playgrounds or within the class. Teachers can as well provide children with necessary information regarding outcomes of various choices. The information provided ought to be real and reliable. Preliminary guidance enhances their ability to make informed decisions. As well, teachers could teach children to express a preference. Nodding is among the most effective ways of expressing a choice. Loud shout outs of 'yes or no' are also rendered efficient. Furthermore, they could teach students on applied choice-making in various school and home settings. Typically, it ought to become a routine for children to utilize the skill either within the school or when at home.

### **Decision-Making Skills**

Decision making is among the most crucial skills in self-determination (Katartzi & Vlachopoulos, 2011). It influences the degree of creative, consideration and weighing of various alternatives' outcomes. Typically, decision making involves making a decision out of different alternatives after considering their potential outcomes and their specialty in meeting specific needs. As well, the decision maker considers the impact of the decision made on him/her and other persons. It is a crucial and procedural process demanding for an attentive and informed understanding of a challenge and its solutions. The skill is vital since it provides a foundation for various self-determination aspects such as goal setting, self-management and problem solving. Unlike choice making where the option is already known to students, in decision-making, the students generate own alternative solutions to a problem and evaluate their suitability in providing an effective solution (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). Effective decision making takes a



procedural framework. Initially, the students need to understand the nature of the problem to be solved. Secondly, the decision maker needs to gather adequate information regarding the issue in question. Then, he/she identifies potential solution geared alternatives. The choices are scrutinized by how they meet desirable outcomes. Their consequences are established and compared to select the most efficient alternative. Then, the most reliable option is selected and implemented. Collectively, effective decision making is challenging, and educators and teachers need to develop effective strategies for teaching on decision-making.

### **Strategies for Decision-Making**

Teachers need to provide assisted information delivery schemes as a strategic approach in advocating for informed decisions (Ghobary, 2007). For instance, they could initialize charts to show various alternatives/options and their consequences upon implementation. Providing students with information regarding effects of different options enhances their choice selection efficacy. Stories and short videos would as well act as good sources of information in sharing the various consequences of various options or alternatives to a problem. Teachers could as well initiate 'negative to positive' approach. The strategy aims at moving from discouraging actions which hinder effective decision making and supporting activities encouraging decision making and participatory events such as IEP goal-setting. Though the above strategies have general usage, educators could use age-level distinct approaches. At elementary stages of teaching, teachers could teach students on the risk element of decision making in respect to practical examples (Pennell, 2011). For instance, they could educate on the consequences associated with their decisions to remaining disobedient to parents and their families. Again, they could encourage decision-making exploration. Associated undertakings include discussing problems, alternative solutions, their outcomes, and consequences in class. The approach enhances their informed decision making. As well, they could advance sources of information by using videos from known speakers and professionals on various topics such as employments and any other topics of interest. At secondary teaching levels, teachers could increase their decision-making skills by allowing them to participate in student conferences such as IEP programs (Goodman, Bains & Moussalli, 2010). They could as well enable them to choose co-curricular activity groups such as clubs on the basis of their preferences. Teachers could as well allow their students to experience various options experience before making their final decisions.

Additionally, educators could provide the students with detailed information about various alternatives such as statistical reports as an effort to increase their options awareness. Typically, the approach aims at giving them initial experience on decision making and its impacts on their activities. Decision-making remains a continuous process in various schools and outside school environments hence redefining its importance among children with disabilities.

### **Goal-Setting and Attainment**

The basics of goals-setting and achievement are reflected in the elementary efforts of setting objectives (short-term and long-term) and developing a plan for actualizing them (Katartzi & Vlachopoulos, 2011). Students goals remain to diverge during their educational experience. Children with disabilities as well tend to have broad goals as compared to healthy children. However, planning on goals achievement plays an integral role in ensuring optimal performance

as they advance their educational needs. Setting goals provides them with a framework or a guideline towards success. There are four critical steps deemed useful in aiding successful goal-setting and achievement (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). The first phase entails making decisions on the actual achievement one needs to achieve over a specified duration of time. Setting goals demand thorough scrutiny of what is real and practical. Individuals may tend to set goals not aligned to their capacities regarding achievements. Students ought to be able to set both academic and co-curricular goals. In the goals setting and specification, they should ensure they are precise. That is, they should set goals whose progress can be established. Setting open-ended goals makes them hard to assess and measure the degree of achievement. Secondly, they should note their aims. Putting set goals down acts as a reminder to the individual's commitment. Studies have revealed that, people who write down their goals experience more goals actualization as compared to those who do not. Typically, writing goals advances commitment towards their achievement. Thirdly, students need to hammer activities supporting their goals achievement (Pennell, 2011). Practically, goals (including short term objectives) cannot be actualized at an instance. The concerned individual must develop a routine of undertakings aimed at meeting the expected performance or state. Actions supporting goals achievement need to become a daily routine.

For instance, students need to develop a framework allowing them to undertake activities supporting their goals daily. The approach ensures consistency and makes achievements a potential reality.

Finally, individuals need to establish frequent reviews and re-assessments on set goals. Situations and educational environment may change hence calling for various changes. Students as such ought to be proactive in ensuring their goals are valid through thorough reviews and re-assessments.

### **Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills**

Self-advocacy refers to one's ability to defend his/her rights, communicate efficiently and boldly and being with leadership qualities (Ghobary, 2007). Typically, individuals may lack awareness of own rights and particularly children with disabilities. Irrespective of their rights, other parties may tend to manipulate them by their developmental challenges. Being aware of individual's rights is not enough and demands profound communication skills. Self-advocacy embraces self-leadership abilities as well. Collectively, the skill is vital in ensuring their preferences are communicated and that they receive respect from other individuals. The ability plays an integral role in providing their life activities decision, and preferences are heard irrespective of their developmental challenges. Consequently, acquisition of self-advocacy and leadership skills ensures that children with disabilities increase the quality of their lives and enjoy their fundamental rights. Self-advocacy has a direct relationship with the children's success in school and the community (Pennell, 2011).

For an example, children with self-advocacy have the ability to communicate their preferences effectively in class. Their communication strengths allow them not only to defend their rights but also exhibit association, interaction, sharing and discussions in school. The skill as such enhances their academic performance. Moreover, it enhances their co-curricular participation hence advancing their overall participation. Such benefits extend to establish their community-based success. Collectively, self-advocacy increases their quality of life by promoting their school and

community success. On the other hand, leadership skills enhance their dedication in meeting other individuals' needs at school and in the community. The overall skill as such has substantial impacts on their quality of life and aggregate contribution in the school and the community.

### **Strategies Supporting Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills**

Teachers and educators play vital roles in enhancing grasp of self-advocacy and leadership skills among children. Teachers could teach children the differences between assertive and aggressive responses to issues particularly in school (Goodman, Bains & Moussalli, 2010). Their understanding of such matters and particularly on the use of positive approaches such as expression of their rights, permissions, and apologies as more preferred to use of physical efforts increases their self-advocacy. Again, they could train on the importance of the preferred behavior as compared to the undesirable as a strategic approach to discouraging use of aggressive methods when situations arise in school. Moreover, they could advocate for leadership skills such as seeking clarification from teachers and parents. Teachers can as well introduce self-advocacy curriculum in classes. Making the concept part of school curricula enhances its training through school-based support efforts. Teachers could as well initiate mentoring programs by matching young adults with same challenges as children to guide and practice self-advocacy and leadership skills. The efforts ensure one-on-one training hence improving skill training. Teachers could as well implement elementary efforts such as training on the adverse effects of using conventional aggressive activities such as bullying (Katartzi & Vlachopoulos, 2011). Eventually, children will understand the importance of individual measures and embrace them. In a different dimension, they could encourage participation in discussion regarding the use of acquired self-advocacy and leadership skills. Debates are most common interaction which motivates students' dedication towards learning desirable skills. Additionally, supporting participation in co-curricular activities such as drama clubs and participating in IEP meetings. Eventually, continued practice and training improve the skill's grasp among children with disabilities hence increasing their quality of life and contribution to the society.

### **Self-Management and Self-Regulation Skills**

Self-management and self-regulation are vital elements in enhancing individual's reinforcement scheduling directing self-behavior through the use of key learning program line self-instruction (Ghobary, 2007). Self-determination typically entails an individual using his/her strengths to overcome respective weaknesses and influence positive behavior. In a similar manner, developing self-management and regulatory skills enhance behavior among students. Technically, self-management and self-regulation increases students' behavior and consequently influencing their performance in schools. Children with self-management skills record high academic performance, outstanding participation, and class involvement. The impacts are also present in the community and workplaces. Well behaved employees in a similar manner exhibit high productivity and ethical behavior. Collectively, self-management and self-regulation skills remain vital in school and the social life. Due to its importance and practical application from childhood to adulthood, educators ought to heavily invest in its training and coaching from early stages of development.

In a different manner, self-management incorporates the element of self-monitoring (Pennell, 2011). The skill is vital in enhancing goals achievement. Self-monitoring is as well an essential tool in improving goals setting and achievement. Individuals utilize the skill to gauge their potentials, identify weaknesses and implement necessary behavior favoring goals actualization. Typically, self-monitoring acts as a basis for self-evaluation and consequently sets a firm foundation for all self-determinations aspects. As such, parents, families, and educators need to focus on enhancing the skills grasp among their children and students.

### **Strategies Supporting Self-Management and Self-Regulation Skills**

Primarily, teachers could enhance self-management skills by encouraging their students to make cartoon drawings with both favorable and unfavorable behaviors (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). The students will be able to understand and distinguish positive from negative reactions. The efforts will typically discourage the practice of undesirable behaviors and advocate for positive behaviors. Since the students make the drawings themselves, their psychology, mentality, and behavior will improve with time. Teachers could as well educate and train on self-management and self-regulation through behavior monitoring sheets. The sheets record practices at different or at all-time in school. Moreover, teachers could teach on self-regulation through the practice of mentored behavior. They could instruct students to behave in similar manners to their preferred social models for example teachers or other known persons with exemplary behavior. Again, teachers could teach self-management and self-regulation through implicit assumption on the traits children would 'love' their best friends possess. Typically, children would love to have their best friend possessing desirable characteristics hence providing a model of a self-managed individual with positive traits (Goodman, Bains & Moussalli, 2010). Their responses could then be used to develop the comparative model as the standard measure of behavioral attributes. The model could then be utilized to detect their (children) deviations and acts as a guide towards the practice of desirable traits. Collectively, the desirable characteristics may be challenging depending on the children developmental behaviors. However, utilization of a standard reference model or behavior increases acquisition of positive behaviors evident within or outside the school environment.

### **Self-Knowledge and Self-Awareness Skills**

Self-awareness is a critical tool in enhancing self-determination since it involves own realization of strengths, potentials, and weaknesses (Ghobary, 2007). It establishes to the degree to which people with disabilities comprehend their health and mental state, abilities, and respective shortcomings. Collectively, it is vital in ascertaining self-esteem for children and adults. Self-awareness acts as a self-determination weapon since the skill enhances intrinsic motivation, dedication, and self-understanding. Moreover, upon self-knowledge and self-awareness, they could use gained knowledge to improve their behaviors and experiences. The skills as well enhance their secondary skills such as communication and responses to insult, emotions, and overall interactions with other people. The skill as well plays an important in improving problem-solving skills as they arise in school or the society.

### **Strategies Supporting Self-Knowledge and Self-Awareness Skills**

Self-knowledge and self-awareness are an essential and as such demand for students' vast involvement in realizing their deep-set strengths and potentials (Katartzi & Vlachopoulos, 2011). As such, educators need to foster their self-scrutiny as they focus on recognizing the. Teachers could request students to write down their strengths and weaknesses. The approach increases their self-understanding and brings to the teacher's and own understanding of their potentials. Individuals listing down ascertained abilities reflect their knowledge of their hidden strength and weaknesses. Upon listing them, the teacher could use the list to enhance their personal strengths and limit their weaknesses by using their hidden potentials. Again, the list could be used to make a list of self-motivation of "cans and cant's", "likes and dislikes" and also posters of the same information. Preparing charts and portraits of own strengths like and dislikes enhance their practical skill development and self-realization. Educators could as well provide students with real life scenarios demanding exposition of self-strengths and weaknesses (Goodman, Bains & Moussalli, 2010). They can use the model to request the students to discuss how they would respond to such challenges. Their response is critical in identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and potential abilities. Moreover, the scenarios could be used to show how people may be different in handling the same challenge. Teachers could optimize the teachings by emphasizing on personality traits. Education students on realizing their strengths and potentials by providing them with a common problem are useful in identifying their essential awareness skills. Teachers could as well enhance their self-awareness by emphasizing on their confidence on positive traits identified and insinuated by other people.

Additionally, educators can host one-on-one discussions with children with students and parents and highlight on their strengths and weaknesses. The approach ensures both parents and teachers are aware of the children self-knowledge and self-awareness. Recognizing and motivating overcoming weaknesses could as well increase their awareness and knowledge base of individual traits (Korinek & Defur, 2016). Extrinsic motivation approaches include reflecting and discussion on famous people with similar developmental challenges who overcame highlighted challenges. In a different dimension, teachers could use personality questionnaires to assess students' strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, they could propose and implement curriculum programs aimed at enhancing students' awareness on their personalities. Teachers could as well use case studies to teach and coach on personality traits.

### **Lesson Creation for Teaching Self-Determination**

Creating a lesson in teaching self-determination remains an important element since the delivery undertaking plays a significant role in influencing class objectives attainment (Ghobary, 2007). First, the teacher ought to stipulate key lesson objectives regarding self-determination. Goals ought to reflect desirable outcomes such as attaining choice-making skills. Notably, the goals ought to be precise and timely i.e. attainable within the lesson speculated duration. The teacher should as well have a framework of how various self-determination skills will be taught during the lesson. Upon full preparation and planning, the lesson ought to start with an introduction to the study topic (self-determination). The opening part ought to take considerable duration to ensure the children understand important objectives which need to be achieved.

Thirdly, the teacher trains on the first element or segment(s) of the topic. The teaching efforts ought to ensure optimal class participation which is also evident in the fourth step. Teaching embarks on the main requirements for

instance on choice-making skills. Fourth, the teacher should initiate class participation by asking children question concerning the topic. Use of examples before asking increases their familiarity with the skill being taught (Cho, Wehmeyer & Kingston, 2013). Fifth, teacher ought to insemminate test observations and questions to measure the degree to which students have gained the taught skill. Oral presentation and individual tests are common and useful in assessing objectives' attainment at the end of the lesson. The teacher can choose to provide the results of the tests immediately or in the next lesson. However, the oral presentation gives general lesson achievements. Finally, the teacher should reintroduce in a summary form the class topics. He/she should as well highlight essential elements learned and advocate for continuous utilization of the taught skill. The task could be accompanied by case referrals for further studies. Typically, lesson planning and insemmination for self-determination in a class of children with disabilities involves optimal interaction between the teacher and the students. The provision allows one-on-one association in teaching and learning new skills (Goodman, Bains & Moussalli, 2010). The lessons are practical oriented and demand student practice of learned skills. Again, skill learning, unlike theoretical classes, needs practice with students requiring opportunities to exercise skills and get chances to raise questions and clarifications. Moreover, due care, diligence, and attention ought to be observed to optimize content delivery.

### **Access to General Education**

Development of the curriculum has entailed educational needs for children with disabilities (Korinek & Defur, 2016). Various programs have been established to enhance continued support for special needs from early childhood stages to high schools and universities. The curriculum, for instance, has specifically influenced its content to include special education for developmentally challenged children. The curriculums assessment profile component plays a vital role in assisting teachers to identify children with special needs. The approach has increased the level of identification of children with communication and education-related needs (Lee, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, & Little, 2008)). Again, the curriculum provides teaching of life skills as an essential element. The provision enhances the teaching of self-determination skills throughout the curriculum hence supporting the specific educational needs of children with disabilities.

Moreover, the establishment of functional education facilities has improved delivery of general education to students with special needs. Today, the state has approved construction of institutions for people with disabilities (Korinek & Defur, 2016). Such undertakings ensure such challenged children (members of the society) have affordable access to general education. Granting and sponsoring such programs in a similar manner has increased their efficacy in delivering educational services to the entire community. On the other hand, not-for-profit organizations have contributed significantly to the advancement of educational services delivery globally. They have as well played an integral role in advocating for educational rights for people with disabilities (Lee et al., 2016).

### **The Case for Ball State University**

Ball State University has shown great compliance with Section 504 and the requirements of ADA regarding addressing the needs of students with disabilities (Richards, 2010). The university management was reported to have massive involvement through policy development and service delivery. The university has a department called



Disability Service (DS), which focuses on availing supportive services to students with disabilities. The department was initiated to address the needs of students with disabilities. The DS also serves as a clearing center for the students. It used by students to claim benefits that they are entitled to as students with disabilities and is used to advocated for justice in instances of discrimination. As such, DS technically undertakes stipulations of ADA, IDEA and other bodies established to seek justice for individuals with disabilities.

In the year 2010, Ball State University was reported by to be among the most effective and compliant institutions in addressing and respecting the rights of students with disabilities (Richards, 2010). The university was given this honor after being established as offering various services and accommodation packages to students with disabilities. For instance, the university has a shuttle program that transports students with physical challenges to and from the institution. The shuttle program defines a strategic undertaking in making the university accommodative and accessible by all students irrespective of their physical ability. The university also provides students with an adaptive physical program which enables development of their self-reliance. The program has deep-seated understanding of overcoming challenges and enhancing self-esteem. The program also acts as a baseline to enhance independence in meeting every day's activities. Moreover, Ball State University provides students with disabilities with comfortable residence halls and housing. The initiative was started as an accommodative activity to ensure the students with disabilities have access to alternative halls and houses that meet their needs (Richards, 2010).

As such, it plays a crucial role in ensuring students with disabilities have access to and can benefit from university facilities and infrastructures. Furthermore, the students have academic mentorship programs that help them optimize their career choice and, as such, optimize their academic benefits. In addition, the university provides students with wheelchair repair services. By recognizing the need in the institution, providing wheelchair service ensures students' mobility by embracing and supporting their daily undertakings and commitment irrespective of their disability.

### **Study Researcher in the Independent Living**

There are many study researchers have showed the positive impact of self-determination skills to assist people with disabilities to have independent living. According to (Gooden-Ledbetter, M. J,2007) in the study that they conducted (Self-efficacy and interdependence as predictors of life satisfaction for people with disabilities: Implications for independent living programs) Independent Living Programs have continually been searching for wherein the services offered by such programs can have a greater positive effect on the people that have disabilities and hence offer enhanced satisfaction among the people with disabilities. This study was carried out at a non-profit community rehabilitation organization in southwest Pennsylvania. The study was designed to evaluate the degree to which two different teaching goals of one of the Independent Living Program, self-efficacy and interrelationship affected the level of satisfaction among people with disabilities. The study was able to show that while Independent Living Program and self-efficacy were significant variables, interrelationship was a more important predictor of the satisfaction experienced by these people with disabilities. The recommendation for Independent Living Programs is that they focus on teaching interdependence as a life-style approach, in addition to teaching self-efficacy skills, thereby maximizing a person's ability to attain life satisfaction. The study was able to show that while Independent

Living Program and self-efficacy were significant variables, interrelationship was a more important predictor of the satisfaction experienced by these people with disabilities. Self-determination is the most important aspect in ensuring that people with disabilities can attain independent living. The authors of this article provide a very critical link between self-determination and independent living. In order to enhance independent living among these people with disabilities, interdependence was important.

In addition, according to (L. Nota, 2007) self-determination is affected by environmental factors, that include living or work settings; and by intra-individual factors, which include aptitude levels, age, gender, social abilities, and adaptive behavior. Additionally, self-determination in this study is correlated to the improved quality of life (QoL). This study wanted to add to the growing literature base within this area by investigating the relationship between individual characteristics, self-determination, social capacity, and the environmental living circumstances of people with intellectual disabilities (ID). This study has established that there is a relationship between self-determination and the quality of life among people with disabilities. The study proved that self-determination among other factors like age; IQ and social abilities were predictors of the quality of life among people with disabilities.

According to, (Mcdermott, S, 2012) the study that he conducted highlights This study highlights the need to promote self-determination that is recognized as an essential element of the disability service provision. The study however tries to determine the extent to which older people having intellectual disability can work within supported employment where they can be able to make deliberate decisions about their retirement. Self-determination as an important aspect in these people with disabilities is also being evaluated to determine how it relates to the decisions that these people with disabilities are capable of making. In this study, it was noted that service providers unanimously agreed that retirement should be a self-determination undertaking for those people with disability and working in the Australian Disability Enterprises, in the same way it is for the general population. These providers opined that inherent within this self-determination is that these people with disabilities can be encouraged to make choices related to their retirement and that such decisions must be respected, even in cases where older, less productive workers with disabilities decide to remain in the workforce. Although the study revealed that a number of elements delayed the participants' ability to make self-determined choices as far as retirement goes including living arrangements, finances, ageing careers, and the shortage of appropriate services, it was important to highlight that self-determination was an important element to independent living among these people with disabilities.

According to (Mackie, P. K. , 2012) The majority studies about disabled young people's accommodation experiences often highlight the structural constraints. However little attention is given to the role that such young people play in shaping their accommodation biographies. This study uses Clapham's (2002) housing pathways framework to reflect on new empirical data that examines the interactions that exist between configuration, agency, and broader discussions within the housing pathways that involve disabled young people. This study creates a typology that focuses on disabled young people's accommodation pathways (tendencies), which consists of direct, phased and return pathways towards independent living. In each of these pathways, these young people with disabilities face main challenges in deciding whether they should leave, find suitable housing, and maintain their accommodation.

The research identified some of the multifaceted interconnected factors that determine the ways young people with disabilities use to negotiate about these challenges and in that are main lessons for policy makers and practitioners. Structural insensitivity was considered a very serious challenge for youth with disabilities. Some were critically impaired and could not make a decision like moving out of home because of such a factor. This demonstrates among the various challenges that people with disability face. People with disabilities are disadvantaged in very many ways. This study focuses on the area where buildings that were built earlier had little or no consideration for people with disabilities. For example, there were no ramps and staircases were used making it hard for people with disabilities to use the staircase. This poses a challenge and is a factor that the study group was very much concerned about. While this group had so many factors out of their control, their choice to live independently was challenged by the fact that inconsiderate structures of accommodation were not desired because they posed a serious challenge to the mobility of these young people with disability.

According to, (Tun, W,2016) this study shows that the existing knowledge and experiences related to accessing HIV services especially for people with disabilities and are living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa is limited. Whereas, HIV transmission among people with disabilities in Africa is gradually being acknowledged, there remains the need to tap into the life the experiences and voices particularly by people with disabilities who are also living with HIV about the challenges that these people face. This is important in raising awareness with the programmer implementers and policy makers concerning the challenges that such people face while accessing HIV services. This study explores how the challenges these people with disabilities living with HIV face that directly obstructs their capacity to access HIV-related services and manage their disease. People with disabilities who are also living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa encounter numerous challenges, especially when it comes to accessing the HIV services. Typically, this study reveals issues like delays in testing for HIV. It was noted in the study that most of these people with disabilities waited until they got extremely sick before they went to be tested. The main reasons given for the delay in testing highlighted the challenges these people experience when trying to get to the health facilities. Other contributing factors were like a deficiency in information related to HIV and testing, and the stigma associated with HIV- and disability. Specifically, these people with disabilities living with HIV reported barriers to HIV-related services. Such barriers included care and treatment, the absence of sensitive staff at the health centers who could offer such people disability-friendly educational materials and even sign interpreters. There was also stigmatizing by the providers and other patients, as well as lack of skills to offer customized services to people with disabilities living with HIV.

In addition, these people were also challenged because of the physically inaccessible infrastructure, and all these factors made it very difficult for people with disabilities to start and sustain their HIV treatment. The study noted that women with disabilities had greater accessibility than men because of the gender-related roles. These challenges were comparable across the three countries studied. It was however noted that favorable experiences related to accessibility to HIV services were recorded in Uganda and Zambia, where there were disability-tailored services that were offered by non-governmental organizations and government facilities. People with disabilities and living with HIV often encounter many challenges whenever they are accessing HIV related services like sustained care and

treatment. The study specifically calls for changes at various levels to ensure unobstructed accessibility to HIV services for people with disabilities.

According to, (Duggan.C, 2013) this study was to categorize the existing evidence base related to the function of natural supports to promote independent living among people with disabilities. An exploration of peer-reviewed literature focused on 30 core papers with 16 contextual papers that covered various issues related to natural supports and their role to facilitate independent living. The study showed that the evidence base is insufficient and highlights majorly on the social networks of people who have intellectual disabilities typically comprising of family among other people with disabilities who use services and staff members. Notably people with disabilities require greater support to establish and maintain social relationships within the community. This study has purposed to recognize the accessible evidence base related to the role, and prospects of natural supports to promote independent living for people with disabilities. The favorable outlook by people with disabilities to some of these initiatives promotes community inclusion as identified in this study suggesting that people with disabilities need support to establish networks of natural supports, and formal services can play an important role in facilitation of such networks. People living with disabilities need to have support both within and without. Networking among people with disabilities is a very practical approach. Technology has made this possible through social networking tools as evidenced by this study. According to, (Henderson, C, 2009) the study he conducted aimed at describing the relationship between health status and activities related to daily living (ADLs) among older adults who had intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The health status and state of self-determination related to the ADLs and walking were studied within a group of 1,371 adults aged 40 years in two regions of upstate New York by the use of the Rochester Health Status Survey. Several logistic regression analyses were carried out to ascertain the relationship between the number of organ system disorders (OSDs) and levels of self-determination in eating, toileting, bathing, clothing, and walking. The occurrence of numerous OSD categories added to poor functional ability among self-care ADLs and walking in people across age groups. In addition, commonly occurring chronic diseases in middle age imposed functional constraints across the age groups.

Therefore, agencies and health providers providing services to older people with disabilities must be proactively involved in providing support that includes disease prevention strategies to maintain functional capability in all age groups. Apparently supporting people with disabilities is important because it helps these people to have good independent living. Supporting them to sustain good health is an important support consideration for people with disabilities. Health status is a predictor of functional impairment that can affect the quality of life among these people with disabilities.

### **Quick Facts**

In 2014, 18.7% of the U.S population had disabilities (Stoddard, 2014). Disabilities spanned from people aged above sixty-five having a percentage of 40.3, to individuals between eighteen and sixty-four taking 51.9% and the youths and children taking 7.8% of the total. The people with disabilities were 33.9% employed as contrasted with individuals without disabilities whose population was 74.2% employed. Poverty wise, people with disabilities reported a percentage of 28.7 with the counterparts without disabilities reporting only 13.6% as being below the

poverty line. Individuals with disabilities ought to be provided with equal opportunities to educate themselves and to get jobs in a similar manner to individuals without disabilities. The literature reviewed in the study has established that people living with disabilities have their specific civil rights that should be respected and honored. Specifically, they do not deserve discrimination since they have the potential to live independently. With federal interventions and contributions of the private sector in providing them with employment opportunities and assistive technology, individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to actualize self-reliance in undertaking their daily activities. Moreover, public, and private institutions such as hospitals, malls, and educational centers should embrace the same norm in enhancing and supporting independent living. Collectively, independent living is possible through collaborative interventions by both the private and private sectors (See Appendix 12).

### **Looking to the Future**

Addressing the issues that arise, like the challenges that people with disabilities face during independent living episodes, suitable interventions that can address the challenges and the importance of providing support all come from specific laws and policies that must be in place to ensure that this is made possible. However, cases where there are no laws and policies that address the issues related to people living with disabilities can only mean that such people will often suffer in silence. In Saudi Arabia, there are no laws, policy or services that specifically try to address the factors that must promote independent living among people with disabilities, the support that can be offered to such people in their setting or the importance of such support frameworks. As such, there is a deficiency in this area, and therefore, this deficiency represents an important area of consideration in terms of creation of laws and policy that can assist people living with disabilities to live independently and have the least disrupted life as possible. Based on a general review of the literature related to self-determination skills that can assist people with disabilities to have independent living, it can be noted that such purposeful intervention stems from laws and policies that have been incorporated throughout various frameworks in society. These interventions and laws form the basis on which any initiatives that target people with disabilities can be launched. Therefore, any society that is looking at how to support those with disabilities to attain individual living must have laws and policy that are focused on providing necessary support to people with disabilities. While policies and laws may not be enough, general change in societal perceptions about those with disabilities is also another important consideration. With opportunities and support, such people are able to live a fulfilling and semi-independent life.

Moreover, teachers, educators, laws, and legislations should work together to assist a person with disabilities to obtain independent living. When I back to my country to Saudi Arabia I have to aware all the society about the importance of supporting people with disabilities to have completely independent living. The independent living does not start from the transition stage, but from the birth. The first change that I hope to do in my country is to contact the responsible for the text of the laws in the government to establish specific laws and legislations to protect people with disabilities from many issues if they do not get the essential and substantial services from early age. I will use CEC standards to service the people with disabilities to assist them to have independent living.

The services that I will establish should cover all the different physic, emotional, social, academic, and health care aspects. To ensure that the environment in which the children and adults with disability live provide continuity in their learning process, offers a conducive environment to nurture independent living and espouses the right attitude towards people living with disability; I will advocate for establishment of continuous awareness and education programs for the whole family to equip the whole family with the requisite knowledge and skills to manage disability and continue with the work done by those who work with the people living with disability. I believe in equipping people with disability across all ages with skills and make them aware of the resources at their disposal to help them cognizant of their options and empower them to live more independent lives and have the power to make choices. These self- management skills should be availed, not just during the school- going ages but throughout life to address the changing needs as people grow. Throughout my work, I tend to go beyond the basic requirement in my tasks and ensure that I impart skills on managing relationships, safety and handling communication. This helps to reinforce any previous training on the same while also ensuring that those living with disability whom I encounter and my not have been exposed to self-management training are exposed to the same. To successfully manage individuals with special needs, there is need to establish their needs and determine what they need to match with the right provider. The laws should also govern referral programs to ensure that institutions responsible assist individuals to obtain the required services.

First, I will create specific laws and legislations for special education services and early intervention. Second, there will be standards and laws for each type of disabilities. Third, there will be a list of children's rights. Forth, I will implement the standards of the CEC. Moreover, the educators and teachers of special education should be assessed for licensing at state or provincial jurisdictions. The CEC and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) outline that all entry level special educators should hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, have clear comprehension of the taught academic content, and can effectively practice the skills cited in both in the CEC common core areas and in other specific areas of specialization. In addition, there will be specific laws that special educators should be well trained in. There should be tremendous pressure put on state and provincial jurisdictions to create and employ rigorous appraisal tests for special educators in order to ensure they are practicing efficiently, as well as determining their competence. Without proper and constant training, it may be difficult for them to perform as desired. This and the many responsibilities that are bestowed upon them in ensuring they provide quality education to the students with disabilities illuminates the importance of ensuring that the special educators are well trained. In addition to this it will be required that teachers of children with disabilities have to engage in activities that foster and facilitate professional enrichment so that special educators remain appropriate in their practices. This is important for reminding educators of their limits, so they therefore practice within those limits. Constant training can be achieved through lectures, seminars, and workshops, which can be conducted at least five times every year.

Moreover, it will state in the laws that special educators should have the abilities to provide to children with disabilities a healthy learning environment. These environments should facilitate safety and emotional wellbeing, cultural understanding, active engagement of students with disabilities, as well as positive social interactions. Special educators are also able to model what they expect from all other students as well, those with special needs and those without. Special educators will be able to foster learning conditions that appreciate diversity as well as harmonious living and productivity in such a culturally diverse universe. In order to attain productivity, they special educators



will be able to impact self-motivation, self-advocacy, personal empowerment, self-direction, and independence to students with disabilities.

In addition, there will be clear laws and policies related to the educational setting for disabled children; the role of the teacher is to make sure that they provide guidance and instruction to students. However, while conducting these duties, I believe that it would be better for the teacher to go further by promoting a system where they become more involved with the children at an individual level. This means that each student has to be provided with the teacher's time, so that concepts can be better explained to them while at the same time allowing the teacher to better understand his/her students. Children with disabilities have to be provided with extra care and special attention by the teacher in such a way that they are constantly placed under observation for the purpose of determining their progress, while also seeking to establish how well they receive the instruction that they are provided by their tutor.

I believe there should be laws relevant to the constant involvement of parents in the process of education. This is essential because it allows the teacher to provide parents with regular updates concerning the performance of their children, and establishes a strong basis upon which further support can be provided for children in their home environments to progress their educational endeavors. In addition, there will be clear and specific laws related to the relationship between parents and teachers of children with disabilities. The new law will be that it is necessary for teachers to establish relationships with both the children involved and with their parents so that there can be a means to get over the stigma of disability, while also supporting the children to become academically proficient. There will also be laws and legislations that teachers and educators of children with disabilities have to address the individual needs of each student. This includes, for example, providing the appropriate equipment in each classroom for each student. With this, too, is making conversation with each student in a way that allows these individuals to build their confidences and helps them feel that they are important members of society. The goal is to help them learn in every way possible.

There should also be strict laws related to the teacher's responsibilities and duties. The law will be that teachers have to undertake the task of educating disabled children with an open mind. This means that they should not set limits to the abilities that these individuals might display, or the possibility of their being able to grasp the different aspects of their education as they advance in their academics. These children must be placed in a multi-tiered learning and care giving environment, where each of them is exposed to diverse concepts or learning processes based on their individual abilities. Such an achievement is essential because it allows for the continued advancement of each child academically, while also focusing on their specific learning problems. This way, the teacher can place emphasis on how best to ensure that these children's capabilities are enhanced. The teaching curriculum should not just include those topics that are completely based on academics, but should also involve the teaching of life skills to these children so that they can not only achieve academic proficiency, but also have the necessary knowledge to integrate in society, despite their disabilities.

Moreover, there will be specific laws related to prepare the child for life and cognitive development helpful in the achievement of national standards of education, my early intervention approach is child-specific. Each child receives intervention according to their challenges and ability. I also make the effort to integrate children with other typically

developing children to hone their socialization skills and foster transfer of skills. I constantly review programs based on the child's development to make them appropriate. Also, there will be laws and legislations which emphasize the fact that children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia have to be provided with strong educational backgrounds that can enable them to better integrate into mainstream society. For continuity of learning, parents and caregivers need to be enlightened on how to handle people with disability and how to implement those lessons from school, and provide support at home. The education of parents also helps contain attitudes that may affect the quality of life for people with disability within the communities in which they live. When I head back to my country I will do my best to provide to families who have children with disabilities a great number of resources and services, so they can appropriately and comfortably manage these new emotions. There will be support services group to assist parent, so they can understand their child abilities and disabilities. There will be free and specific programs available to educate parents on how to focus on the positive abilities that their child has. There will also be professionals available to assist parents in their own homes. Moreover, I will establish a center of resources and information for parents. This center will provide a safe place for parents to find the necessary information and resources that they need. There will be programs and free services to support early intervention; there will be also many workshops educating parents about IEP, and how they must use positive reinforcement with their children.

## **Conclusion**

Individuals with disabilities ought to be provided with equal opportunities to educate themselves and get jobs in a similar manner to individuals without disabilities. The literature reviewed in the study has established that people living with disabilities have their specific civil rights and which should be respected and honored. In specific, they do not deserve discrimination since they have the potential to live independently. With federal interventions and contributions of the private sector in providing them with employment opportunities and assistive technology, they have the opportunity to actualize self-reliance in undertaking their daily activities. Moreover, public, and private institutions such as hospitals, malls, and educational centers should embrace the same norm in enhancing and supporting independent living. Collectively, independent living is possible through collaborative interventions by both the private and private sectors.

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### About the Author

I am Sarah AL-Sharif. From Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. Currently, I am doctoral student at Ball State University-Special Education Department. In 2015, I graduated from master's degree from Ball State University- Special Education Department. I obtained my bachelor's degree from King Saud University - Special Education Department in Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. I have started my dissertation in full 2017. I am working at King Saud University as lecture. After I graduate from the PHD, I will back to my work at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. I changed my dissertation topic from "Using Dramatic Playing Center to Improve Social Skills in Children Who Diagnosed with Autism in Early Childhood Education". To "Teacher's Perceptions of The Impact of Peer-Mediated Instruction Intervention Through Social Playing to Improve Social Skills for Children with ASD In Preschool in General Education Classrooms". Actually, I have changed my dissertation topic because I found from my reading that, children with ASD have several social effects especially on the school



setting. They have many problems that involve adults or their peers including recognizing non-verbal language, participation in group play, making eye contact, making lasting friendships and responding to conversations and non-verbal expressions. Peer-Mediated Instruction Intervention (PMII) is one of the most effective intervention that assist children with ASD to improve social skills. In this intervention, teacher train peer without disabilities to interact with children with ASD by encourage children with ASD to engage and participate with peer in different activities in classroom in general education classrooms. Additionally, PMII, have shown to improve the non-verbal skills, social interaction, friendships, and reciprocal social communication. All the reviews state that PMI is an effective way of improving the social skills of children with autism (Chang & Locke,2016). There are short-term benefits of PMII to children with ASD. It shows that interacting with peers during play helps to improve the social skills of children with ASD. There are various types of PMII They include Peer Tutor, Peer Buddy, Group-Oriented Contingency, Peer Networks, Integrated Peer Groups, Peer Initiation Training and Pivotal Response Training. Integrated Play groups are the type where an adult gives the peers and children with autism an environment that would help them interact with one another. Children with ASD enjoy playing like other children without disabilities, but children with ASD face challenges since they only play with few toys in a repetitive way. They may find it difficult to copy some actions, explore the surrounding, share their objects, take turns, and respond to others. Improving the social skills of the children with ASD is the most important aspect to teachers in the school setting. Teachers should observe those peers that children interact with (Chang & Locke,2016). To support peer engagement that yields interactions, teachers should look at the emotional support given to all the students in class. Teachers should show support to all children and avoid favoring others. It may be difficult to show emotional support to all children. Therefore, professional development and training with support from counsellors can help to improve this factor. Supporting children with autism does not mean only in their behavior and social skills. The workload that the teacher gives to the students is also a way of helping them. The teacher should ensure that the work they give to children with autism either in school or at home is achievable. It should not be too much or too little. Children with autism often find some topics interesting and others not interesting (Chang & Locke,2016). Therefore, due to this nature, teachers should sometimes give the children a choice on what they want to do. Many studies have been conducted to understand the perception that teachers have in using intervention as a method of helping children with autism improve their social skills. There are many types of interventions that have been used in classrooms to help improve the social skills of the children with autism (Katz, 2014). In conclusion, knowing teacher's perceptions about various interventions for children with ASD assist the school administration to provide to teachers who are working with children with ASD, professional development workshops, in the interventions that teachers believe that they are effective for children with ASD achievement and interaction with peer in general education classroom Katz, 2014).

[To top](#)

## Book Review: Leading in a Culture of Change

By Adianez Alfonso

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 134 pp., \$13.60

### Abstract

“Change is a leaders friend, but it has a split personality”. Michael Fullan is known world wide for managing change by evaluating change projects through trainings and consultations. His purpose for writing “Leading in a Culture of Change” was to develop five key components that leaders can use to improve their leadership by adapting to changes within the work environment. He developed the “Framework for Leadership”, designed to assist leaders to identify moral purpose, understanding change, creating relationships, knowledge building and coherence making. Traits such as enthusiasm, energy, and hope are included in the framework. Fullan argues that there are is constant change, which leads to determining the effectiveness of a leader based on their contributions and commitment towards change, organization, and their team.

### Summary

The book is based on key components a leader should use to promote success within their leadership abilities. Fullan’s framework includes five components of leadership that have been designed to guide leaders in adapting to changes and developing effective leadership abilities that will allow others to build the foundations of leadership. The first key component is moral purpose, which is to achieve and create an impact on the growth for levels and performances that will occur through motivation and inspiration. Understanding change is the second key component, which involves strategizing new skills and understandings by respecting differences and testing knowledge. Building relationships through networking, organizing principles, and developing strategies that promote growth, is the third key component of the framework. Fullan’s fourth key component is developing knowledge by building the ability to share, create and manage new information through shared learning experiences. Lastly, coherence making is the fifth component in which developing a new mindset to focus on the outcomes of growth, will result in gains that will be made with the action plans designed. When leaders are attentive and are active listeners, this allows for the development of effectiveness towards building a goal in an expanded time period.

### Arguments

Fullan indicates that change is constant, and leadership is determined by the ability of effectively adapting to change, developing organization and building leadership within the team. He states, “For me leadership is about creating a sense of purpose and direction. It's about getting alignment and it's about inspiring people to

achieve” (p. 19). Working on changes that occur when developing visions, action plans and goals can be stressful. As leaders, working through change is a key factor into achieving success since there will always be new obstacles that will be faced throughout our work environment. According to Fullan, “The best way to ‘manage’ change is to allow for it to happen” (p. 33). When developing leaders within the team, it’s important to be directive and organized, as it guides the team to be aware of any changes. Fullan states that “In this world, interactions, or relationships, among its agents are the organizing principle” (p. 52). Keeping organization within the work environment can promote effective methods to develop. “Furthermore, tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in an individual's action and experience, as well as in the ideals, values, or emotions that he or she embraces” (p. 80).

### **Evaluation**

Fullan’s Framework for Leadership is an excellent guide for developing leadership skills in times of change within the work environment. Fullan states that “Knowledge, as distinct from information, is closely attached to human emotions, aspirations, hopes, and intention” (p. 81). When dealing with changes, things may get complex and within this book you will learn specifics into working through these obstacles effectively. The text gives a great explanation throughout each chapter of the importance of building leaders in order to improve the work environment with collaboration. According to Fullan, “cooperative groups thrive and selfish ones do not, so cooperative societies have survived at the expense of others” (p.15). Within the text, it is difficult to see clear examples of specific examples in which leaders can relate too in order to develop a system that will help with adapting to specific changes they may face.

### **Comparing and Contrasting Literature**

The books “Leading in a Culture of Change” by Michael Fullan and “What Great Principals Do Differently: Eighteen Things That Matter Most/ Edition 2” by Tom Whitaker, both guide and inspire educational leaders worldwide. In both books, each author discusses how to respect, build bonds, and share knowledge with team members along with dealing with change. Fullan developed a Framework for Leadership, which involves five components: moral purpose, understanding change, building relationships, knowledge building and coherence making. Whitaker specifies on eighteen components that relate to school administration such as sharing knowledge, work alongside, hire, and deal with frustrating teachers. He also discussed on dealing with standardized test, setting expectations, and focusing on behavior and beliefs. When reviewing both of their theories, both authors discuss the importance of what it takes to develop leadership traits that will create an effective system within the school environment. Leaders are given the opportunity to read about how to promote, encourage, and engage for successful action plans.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, “Leading in a Culture of Change” is an excellent book that will benefit managers, educational leaders, administration, teachers, and graduate students. The book is an important key when learning about “how to

lead”, as the framework created helps leaders and upcoming leaders learn about traits that can help with becoming effective and organized. Leadership is an important topic that can help not only upcoming and current leaders, but as well to individuals whom are looking towards becoming involved in a team to develop effective decisions towards succeeding and accomplishing goals and plans.

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### **About the Author**

Adianez Alfonso is a Special Education teacher in the state of Florida. As a current graduate student from Florida International University, Adianez has examined various books that discuss special education and leadership within the school environment. She has taught in the elementary school setting for four years. In the process of growing in her career, she has expectations of working towards becoming a principal in the future.

[To top](#)

# Intrinsic Motivation: Motivating Gifted Students in the Classroom

By Qamrah Alsubaie

Intrinsic motivation in learning is important for academic success (Froiland, Oros, Smith, & Hirschert, 2012). Generally, intrinsic motivation has been described as a desire within oneself that will lead to improvement in academic performance (Clinkenbeard, 2012). To state simply, intrinsic motivation is inside energy that pushes learners to do something that come from their desire without any outside impact that promotes or punishes them. When students have a goal to achieve, they may develop interest within them not only to follow through activities and tasks, but also to perform the activities and tasks successfully (Afzan, Ali, Khan, Hamid, 2010). This is also true with students who are gifted. Gifted students have the ability to “demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, and sports)” (National Association for Gifted Children, 2005). However, gifted students are only intrinsically motivated when the tasks given to them matches the challenge level of the task (Clinkenbeard, 2012). Additionally, for gifted students, intrinsic motivation to learn involve engaging in learning opportunities because they are pleasurable, exciting, and relevant to fulfill their learning goals. Such activities will encourage gifted students to be task committed (Renzuli, 1986), which in turn will enhance students’ abilities and success in the classroom. To enhance gifted students’ academic performance, it is important for teachers to know that intrinsic motivation impacts positive learning behavior, critical thinking, and perseverance (Froiland, Oros, Smith, & Hirschert, 2012; Point, 2003; Poonam, 1997).

Individuals who are intrinsically motivated are likely to have positive academic achievement (e.g., Cordova & Lepper, 1996; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Because gifted students are fully motivated, they are highly engaged and are able to be very attentive in class. These students experience a sense of control and that impacts their behavior in learning positively (Bandura, 1997). Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, and Shernoff (2003) found when high-school students experienced a classroom activity as challenging and within their control, they also rated their concentration and attention as greater. This builds on the students’ self-efficacy, and they believe they could accomplish any tasks (Gottfried, 1990). Consequently, gifted students with high intrinsic motivation become enthusiastic, self-driven, challenging, and excited in learning. According to Allred (2008), positive learning behavior can be achieved when students are taught in a consistent and systematic way. To enhance this relationship between intrinsic motivation and positive academic achievement, teachers should adapt instructional materials to meet the needs of the students who are intrinsically motivated to ensure positive academic achievement (Schunk, 1990) and to ensure that lessons are taught systematically. Activities designed for these students should be challenging because it is typical for children to be curious towards things that are

new and difficult (Lepper & Henderlong, 2000). One example is to challenge students to come up with solutions to old problems. Also, students with high intrinsic motivation could be asked to become leaders in their groups by allowing them to design the structure of the activities. Using activities that students are interested in will impact positively on students' motivation.

Intrinsic motivation has an impact on critical thinking. To think critically, gifted students should be able to apply, analyze, synthesize, and/or evaluate information (Hidden Curriculum, 2014). Because gifted students are intrinsically motivated they would find critical thinking activities challenging and will be curious participants. These challenging activities will enable gifted students to come up with ideas and strategies to successfully complete their learning goals. To improve this relationship between intrinsic motivation and critical thinking, teachers should provide challenging strategies such as problem solving, group projects, demonstration, and building conceptual ideas. Teachers should encourage students to work in small groups, which will allow them to interact with their peers. During discussion sessions, gifted students will have to identify steps to problem solve the task given to them. This requires students to use the knowledge they have acquired to find the solution. Consequently, as students involve in such challenging activities, they will be able to develop higher critical thinking skills (Dev, 1997). In other words, when critical thinking is reinforced, knowledge integration leads to creativity (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008). In the classroom context, these classroom practices will increase students' intrinsic motivation, which will enhance students' abilities to achieve their learning goals.

Intrinsic motivation has an impact on perseverance when gifted students experience interesting and challenging activities. Because gifted students are known to be highly motivated to learn and are more likely to "demonstrate strong conceptual learning, improved memory, and high overall achievement in school" (Gottfried, 1990), they will be persistent even though it is difficult to achieve success. Their intrinsic motivation will lead to engagement with the task. To enhance this relationship between perseverance and intrinsic motivation, teachers should provide free choice of activities to increase the number of interesting tasks. For example, in a reading class, teachers should allow students to select more challenging books to read. Alice and Marshall (2005) and Olatunji (2013) found that students tend to select more challenging books when given a choice to select their own books. The gifted students will persevere if they have chosen a difficult book to read because it is a task they enjoy. Additionally, they will be willing to work long hours to complete their tasks. Therefore, it is important for teachers to recognize students' ability to persevere and provide them with appropriate activities to ensure gifted students are invested.

Intrinsic motivation is the motivation to do something for its own sake, and it has been linked to positive learning behavior, critical thinking, and perseverance. The fostering of intrinsic motivation in gifted students is especially important given their ability to enhance their knowledge. Improving their knowledge means, gifted students will be able to engage in challenging and difficult activities. Due to benefits connected with intrinsic motivation, teachers would be wise to improve classroom practices that will inspire students to be very engaged and challenged. Using various strategies and various challenging activities, gifted students will persevere to achieve due to students' interests or curiosity.



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[To top](#)

## Book Review: Leadership is an Art

By Melissa Smiley

*Leadership is an Art* by Max De Pree was written in 1989 and first printed by Michigan State University Press. It has since been translated into many languages and sold over 800,000 copies. The book is 147 pages long and currently sells for \$16.95.

Max De Pree wrote “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you.” Becoming a leader takes time. Becoming an inspiring leader takes heart. Connecting with people in a way that is both institutional and emotional and then also connecting with the world is an art, as is leadership.

Although *Leadership is an Art* was first published almost 30 years ago, it continues to teach a valuable lesson regarding quality leadership. This book explains leadership in a way that can connect with leaders in all fields. Even though this is not written directly for principals or other leadership roles in the education system, it provides valuable information about working with people and creating positive relationships and working environments.

De Pree also authored several other books on leadership but continues to be best known for his work as the CEO of Herman Miller, Inc, an office furniture company. De Pree worked as CEO from 1980 to 1987. He served on the company’s Board of Directors until 1995. De Pree was passionate about his company and the employees who worked there. *Leadership is an Art* was the first book he wrote about leadership. It continues to be a relevant and motivating book for aspiring and novice leaders.

De Pree had a vision of an inclusive corporation where all voices are heard. He believed that creating a climate of caring relationships and open communication where employees are appreciated will result in business success. By writing this book and filling it with many personal experiences and stories he is able to connect with the reader through real world experiences. Through questions embedded into the chapters of the book, he forces reflection and an eagerness to become the best leader possible. Throughout the book he encourages the reader to analyze their current practices and beliefs and look towards the future. Max De Pree hoped to spark the same passion he has for leadership in others.

*Leadership is an Art* is written in an easy to read format that flows from one idea to another in a cohesive manor. It tells stories about qualities of great leaders and situations where leaders can learn. It speaks directly to the reader. This book does not follow the traditional beginning, middle, and end like you would find in most books. You can literally start anywhere (as it is stated in the first sentence of the first chapter). It is more like a collection of ideas, beliefs and stories that paint a picture of how a leader learns from everyday experiences. It does describe many of the practices that were put in place at Herman Miller, Inc and found to be quite

successful. He dedicates a lot of space in this book to the description of the importance of relationships between the leader and the ones they lead.

Max De Pree believes that building positive relationships with the people you work with is essential to the success of the group. This is a theme repeated throughout the book. On page 9 he writes that “Understanding and accepting diversity enables us to see that each of us is needed. It also enables us to begin to think about being abandoned to the strengths of others, of admitting that we cannot know or do everything.” In today’s education system teachers and principals alike are facing many challenges regarding the culture and climate of schools. It is important to have confidence that there is beauty and power in diversity. This can be used to help community relationships and student success. Michael Fullan, who dedicated chapter 4 in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change* to relationships and how building and maintaining them are an essential part of leading, also reflects on the idea that relationships and knowledge go hand in hand when discussing growth and change. He states that “knowledge sharing fuels relationships” on page 76. This idea complements the beliefs of De Pree regarding accepting and listening when people’s views and beliefs are not the same as your own. Leading is being able to see personal weakness as an opportunity to use strengths in others for the betterment of the organization

The educational system has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. These changes continue to affect the leadership and the roles they play. While individual schools do not have control over the initiatives and rules placed on them by the education system, principals do have some authority on how they will be implemented and the culture the school strives to maintain. De Pree asks a question about the ideal work situation. On page 23 he writes “We would like to find the most effective, most productive, most rewarding way of working together.” The leadership in schools can strive to define and then create their own ideal work situation.

As an educator I believe this book can be related to all types of leadership roles within the school system. The directors, the principal and support staff of a school, and the teachers could easily relate to this book. Its strength is the way it uses real anecdotes from all genres that are easily relatable to its reader. It offers some structure and specific approaches but also urges the reader throughout the book to reflect and make their own decisions.

Anyone who is an aspiring leader or who is currently in a leadership role could benefit from reading this book. Its message continues to be relevant despite all the technology advances and changes in management organization models since its publication 30 years ago. The bottom line is to build relationships, learn from each other, and continue to grow.

### **About the Author**

Melissa Smiley has worked in the Broward county school system teaching children with autism for 13 years. For the past three years she has provided behavior support for the six self-contained autism special program classes at Mirror Lake Elementary. Melissa enjoys mentoring the teachers she works with. Her passion for educating

children with disabilities began at an early age when her younger brother was diagnosed with autism. She recently graduated with her Masters in special education with a focus in autism from Florida International University.

[To top](#)

# **The Impact of Full Inclusion on Students with Disabilities**

**By Sarah Gomez**

## **Abstract**

This review describes Inclusion as used in Exceptional student Education today as well as its implications on students with disabilities, their typically developing peers, educators, and other professionals in the field. The proposed research will be used to investigate the effect Inclusion has on student success, specifically in the core subjects of reading/language arts and mathematics, in students with specific learning disabilities. Specific learning disabilities is one of the most prevalent disability categories, encompassing 39.2 percent of students ages 6 through 21 serviced under IDEA, Part B in 2014 (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2016 p. 37). There is controversy today to see how effective full inclusion truly is for students with disabilities and analyze how much academic content they gather in the general education setting. These professionals collaborate to provide all learners access to the general curriculum and provide accommodations when mandated on an Individual Education Plan.

## **Introduction**

Inclusion can be defined as the integration of all students into general education classrooms of their communities despite disability or need and rejects any form of segregation amongst its students (Murphy, 2016). Students in these classrooms will be taught holistically and any additional services required are nearly always conducted in the general education classroom. “Under Part B of IDEA, the secretary provides funds to states to assist them in providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children ages 3 through 21 with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services” (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2016 p. 25) According to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, our country is providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for 753,697 students ages 3-5 in the United States under legal legislation IDEA Part B in the fall of 2014 (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2016). The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services also provided services to 67,039,493 student ages 6-21 (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2016). All the students serviced, they fall into different categories to qualify to receive Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services. For the purpose of the research project, the topic being explored is the effectiveness of the full inclusion program on students with specific learning disabilities. It is important to note that full inclusion refers to a student’s educational placement being the general education classroom for more than 80% of the school day (Wexler, 2016). Although, the theoretical framework for inclusion has been in controversy throughout the field of education by multiple professionals, inclusion is practiced and services are provided today. One of the top concerns of inclusion is how programs will create safe learning environments that will provide students with (...effective instructional arrangements for all students- with the end goal of inclusive placements” (Wang &

Reynolds, 2016 p. 22). Below we will analyze inclusion practices, its affects on all students, involved educators, as well as where education will be moving in the future.

### **Collaborative Classrooms**

The term collaborative can be used to describe an entire schools' support in decision making and collaboration in the planning and delivery of an educational curriculum to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom (Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016). This means that all educators, of general and special education, support personnel, and school administrators must come together and to plan and deliver instruction all students in their inclusive classrooms. Despite the varying needs of students in a classroom, the general education and special education teachers must successfully work together so that skills from both educators can be fused and work in harmony to optimize student learning experiences (Wang & Reynolds, 1996). A major concern of opponents of inclusion is the interaction amongst the effects of students with disabilities and their typically developing peers. According to Justice, Logan, Kin, and Kaderavek (2014), there has been little research provided on the potential benefits of inclusive classroom provisions.

### **Affects on Students**

The main goal of inclusive programs is for students to have access to the least restrictive learning environment possible. Least restrictive environments, in this research, can be defined as the environment in which students can assimilate into providing them an experience closest to the traditional school setting as the student can handle (Justice et al., 2014). Students qualifying for exceptional student services can be placed in a multitude of educational settings including general education classrooms, resource rooms, self-contained classrooms, as well as separate facilities (Murphy, 2016). For the purposes of this review, we will keep focus on the educational placement of inclusion that requires students with specific learning disabilities placed in general education classroom under direction of the general education teacher and a special education teacher as a co-facilitator during core subjects. According to Murphy (2016), inclusionists believe that traditional segregated educational placements provide are detrimental effects to the socialization of students with learning challenges. Students of all ages need the opportunities to watch and learn from their typically developing peers whom serve as experts or models, with the aid of a special education teacher (Justice et al., 2014). Students with specific learning disabilities should also be held to high standards as well as provided access to the general education curriculum in being provided the appropriate accommodations in all subjects, when applicable. In contrast, Murphy (2016) also cites that opponents argue that inclusion does not provide the proper support for students struggling with serious emotional or behavior problems; support cannot be given effectively in the typical class setting. Thus, student assigned to inclusion are considered being assimilated into the general education classroom on a case-by-case basis.

One of the primary concerns of professional involved in inclusion, is the affects the program has on students not considered ESE and the peer involvement amongst the diverse array of students. When first examining these affects, Justice et. al (2014) notes that in terms of social economic status, the lowest income bracket held



the highest number of students holding current IEP's. Upon reading the research project conducted by Justice et al. (2014), on peer relationships amongst inclusive preschool classrooms the findings were significant. Justice et al. (2014), concluded that students with disabilities did benefit and perform at levels similar to their peers in the category of language skills when integrated with students with higher language skills as per assessment results over time. Typically developing students have also been cited to benefit and be personally enriched through interactions with students of varying needs. These students also learn to be more empathetic and understanding of those with opinions and thoughts different from their own. This relates to the arguments made earlier by Murphy (2016), in which students with disabilities do significantly benefit from integration with typically developing peers. Justice et al. (2014) findings also conclude that peer relationships in inclusive classrooms tend to be positive beneficial for all learners.

### **Implications for Educators**

Any new theoretical framework implemented requires further study and implementation by educators everywhere, regardless of the number of years in service. All professionals involved including the administrators must use a more hands-on approach and encourage successful collaboration amongst all teachers at the school site in order to best service the students. Many educators share concerns that most of their instruction will focus on guiding the students with disabilities and less time and attention will be given to typically developing students (Murphy, 2016). This is especially true for educators of special areas that are responsible for providing services to many students all at once without the assistance of a special education teacher.

### **Controversy**

Controversy arises in the implementation and practice of inclusion rather profoundly. Although multiple sources have shares the many benefits of inclusion on all students, multiple professionals have cited drawbacks to the program. Opponents of inclusion often debate that because of the abnormal behaviors of students with disabilities will often lead to isolation or rejection (Murphy 2016). It is unclear which educational placement yields the highest success rate in students with disabilities as it is dependent and varies by student.

### **A Glimpse into the Future**

Murphy (2016) cites that the effect of inclusion on typically developing students warrants further scientific investigation. As education progresses and continues to be up to par in meeting the needs of our diverse array of learners, many professionals hope that inclusion continues to be studied and its effects on the overall educational system are established.

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Sarah Gomez is a graduate student at Florida International University perusing a Master's degree in Exceptional Student Education with an autism endorsement. Ms. Gomez is currently a public school special education teacher in Miami, Florida where she provides inclusive services to elementary students in multiple grade levels and subjects. She is especially passionate about teaching younger students with special needs. While not teaching, Sarah enjoys spending time with friends, family, and pets.

[To top](#)

# **Teacher Preparation for Instruction of Exceptional Student Education Students in the General Education Classroom**

**By Katherine J. Ramirez**

## **Abstract**

It was found that general education teachers do not feel prepared to meet the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) needs of special education students in an inclusive classroom (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). Four peer reviewed research articles were found through the ERIC search engine to explore the cause of teachers feeling unprepared for an inclusive classroom. Through research, it was found that teachers' feelings were a result of a lack of preparation, communication, and collaboration. Research found that it is imperative that general education teachers feel confident in regards to educating special education students because they are with the students a majority of the school day and are responsible for their core education (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). The attitudes of the teachers are linked to how prepared they feel and the students' success in the classroom. Future work may be researched to further understand ways to make general education teachers feel more confident to teach inclusive classrooms (LeDoux, Graves, & Burt, 2012).

## **Teacher Preparation for Instruction of Exceptional Student Education Students in the General Education Classroom**

When it comes to meeting the diverse needs of special education students, many teachers lack the proper training and preparation to properly educate them. Research shows that the lack of preparation leads to negative attitudes of educators, which in turn results in the inadequate instruction of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). When it comes to teaching inclusive classes, lack of preparation, communication, and collaboration have been cited as reasons for knowledge falling short. Through research, it is hoped that with proper preparation, general education teachers will feel confident when it comes to teaching students with disabilities following inclusive models (LeDoux, Graves, & Burt, 2012).

Similar research has been conducted in research articles such as "Meeting the Needs of Special Education Students in Inclusion Classrooms", "Promoting Inclusive Education: The Role of Teachers' Competence and Attitudes", "Successful Inclusion of Adolescent Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities- Conditions and Challenged within a Mainstream School Context", and "What Does Teachers' Perception Have to do with Inclusive Education: A Bahamian Context". All articles were found by using the ERIC search engine.

## **Importance**

When it comes to productive and effective inclusive classrooms, it is essential that the general education teacher is on board and prepared to take on the task of educating both general education and special education students. It is compulsory that the general education teacher be properly taught on how to balance the inclusive classroom because he/she is the main person responsible for the education of the students (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018).

## **Preparation**

### **Training and Professional Development**

One of the reasons teachers stated that they did not feel prepared to meet the needs of special education students was due to the lack of formal training in the subject. Most teachers do not feel prepared to teach students with disabilities because they do not know how to incorporate varying levels of support to meet their individual needs. The teachers who were not taught how to teach students with disabilities go into teaching with a negative attitude towards inclusive classrooms because they are wary of what they do not understand (LeDoux, Graves, & Burt, 2012). Inclusion classes require specialized methods and strategies on how to effectively incorporate students with disabilities into general education settings with the appropriate academic and pro-social supports. Additionally, teachers who never had formal training lack knowledge of instructional methods on how to reach the students. The teachers are then generally frustrated that they do not know how to teach their diverse population of students (Sigstad, 2017). Specifically, some teachers are frustrated because they find it difficult to include students with disabilities into their classrooms. Others refuse to accept these students into their class and want to focus on the higher achieving students instead of the struggling ones (Hunter-Johnson, Newton, & Cambridge-Johnson, 2014). In contrast to ill-prepared teachers, preservice teachers were found to have less anxiety towards inclusive classrooms because they had introductory courses that touched on a little bit of information they would need in their career (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). Through research, it is found that teachers who took special education courses that incorporated real life experience and projects into the curriculum, had a better understanding of the demands of teaching inclusive classrooms. They were also more confident in regards to accommodating the individual needs of the students (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). It was found that the amount of professional development provided to teachers correlated with the attitude of the teachers towards inclusion classes (LeDoux, Graves, & Burt, 2012).

### **Attitude**

Most in-service teachers had negative feelings in regards to inclusion because they were never taught specific methods on how to educate special education students (Hunter-Johnson, Newton, & Cambridge-Johnson, 2014). On the other hand, preservice teachers had mostly positive feelings because they have not been exposed to the system yet (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). The research conducted found that

the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion were linked to the success of the students in the classroom (Hunter-Johnson, Newton, & Cambridge-Johnson, 2014). If the teacher's attitude was positive regarding inclusion then the students did better when compared to students who had teachers with negative attitudes towards inclusion. Inadequate special education training has been linked to the negative attitudes of teachers because they feel unprepared and blindsided towards the whole process (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). The research depicted that if the school incorporates inclusion into its values, then the teachers were more likely to have a positive outlook on the system because the teachers felt supported from the top (Sigstad, 2017). Additionally, it was found that the more proficient a teacher is in the inclusion process, the higher his/her motivation is to teach the students. If the teachers felt prepared to take on an inclusion classroom then they had a better attitude, and in turn properly met the needs of the students (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018).

### **Communication**

LeDoux, Graves, and Burt (2012) found that general education teachers felt the need for more communication between teams in order to meet their own needs and the needs of the students. As documented in the study, the general education teachers felt that they needed to have more communication with the special education teachers to be on the same page when it came to scheduling, planning, and setting students' goals. General education teachers felt like they were the last to find out about any changes to a schedule or to the individualized goals for a student. They were also not informed of any special education students that were on their roster until they showed up class. Lacking or poor communication can often leave the teachers blindsided and scrambling to find plans and accommodate the students. It was also found that the teachers needed to communicate their needs to the special education team regarding scheduling or behavioral issues. By communicating their own needs, the teachers are able to receive the help they need to meet the students' goals (LeDoux, Graves, & Burt, 2012).

### **Collaboration**

One of the reasons the researchers discovered the teachers were not meeting the needs of students is because of lack of collaboration between teams. Having students with disabilities in the classroom can be difficult, especially if everyone is not on the same page. It is important that the general education teachers collaborate together to synchronize their methods when dealing with students with disabilities (Pit-ten, Markova, Krischler, & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2018). The students need uniformity and collaborating between teachers is one way to ensure the students are receiving the same instruction and procedures across the board. Collaboration between the general education team and the special education team is also an important part of the puzzle. In regards to planning lessons, it was found that when special education teachers were involved in the process, the needs were more likely to be met because they gave feedback during the planning process (Sigstad, 2017). The teachers should also collaborate on the time of pull out instruction. By working together, the general education teacher has a say and is aware of when the student leaves and the special education teacher is not disrupting the

middle of a lesson. Collaborating across teams leads to a more organized system where everyone is on the same page (Sigstad, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

It has been empirically established that the success of general education teachers in inclusive classrooms relies on multiple interconnected factors. The teachers feel that they are not provided with enough preparation in regards to special education and that there is a lack of communication and collaboration between teams. By the teachers feeling ill-prepared to teach an inclusion classroom, their attitudes are negative towards the special education students which result in goals not being properly met in the classroom. However, with proper education, communication, and collaboration, general education teachers may have more successful inclusive classrooms.

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### **About the Author**

My name is Katherine Ramirez and I am a special education teacher. I currently teach 4th , 6th , and 7th grade students with disabilities in a pull out setting. I earned my Bachelor's degree in special education with endorsements in reading and English Speakers of Other Languages from Broward College and am currently working towards my Master's degree in special education with an endorsement in Autism Spectrum Disorder from Florida International University. When I can find spare time, I enjoy crafting and going to Disney.

[To top](#)

# Immigrant Parents Advocating in Special Education: A Literature Review

By Amairany Paniagua

The literature review will discuss the findings of four peer-reviewed articles on the primary reasons why immigrant parents are less likely to advocate for their children with special needs. Moreover, they also provide suggestions on ways to increase the advocacy of immigrant parents in their child's education. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) students who have a disability that interferes with their education have the right to free and appropriate education (FAPE). At the same time, IDEA also allows parents to have a voice in their child's education. However, immigrant students with disabilities are less likely to receive the appropriate services needed due to the muted voices that their parents have. These muted voices come from the marginalization that parents feel at schools; fear of the school system; lack of communication with school personnel; and lack of information in their native language or at their educational.

## Immigrant Parents Advocating in Special Education: A Literature Review

A child's special education program is best designed when the parents collaborate with all of the professionals involved in the care and education of the child with special needs (McCloskey 2010), at least this was the primary point made throughout the articles. However, collaboration is not always possible especially when immigrant parents are the parents who need to advocate for their child. This issue is not due to immigrant parents loving their child with disabilities less than American parents; instead, it is due to various barriers that inhibit immigrant parents from being the voice that their kids need. In order for a child to receive the best possible education possible, parents must be active members of their child's educational planning starting at the primary level and continuing throughout their child's educational career.

## Muted Voices Caused by Marginalization

Trying to make immigrant parents assimilate to the Eurocentric school culture, that is predominantly white and middle-class, often causes immigrant families to feel marginalized when trying to advocate for their child with a disability. Not having the correct skin color, not knowing how to speak proper English, and not having a nice car, makes parents feel looked down upon by school administrators and personnel. Schools must learn that the Eurocentric School Culture adopted by the United States, is not the same culture adopted around the world. Thus they must accept and learn to work with the different cultures and beliefs that walk through their doors and not feel offended when someone, with a different belief from them, disagreed with them or is not on call at all times of the day.

In the article, *Reversing the Dehumanization of Families of Color in Schools: Community-Based Research in a Race-Conscious Parent Engagement Program*, the researchers, try to give parents--who are usually not big advocates in schools--a leadership role in their child's educational well-being. The goal is accomplished by



having the parents feel like a valued member of the school team by immersing them in the school culture. The authors affirm that parents must have active participation in their child's education, in order to assure that their child has the best possible education. Rather than giving all the power to the teachers and school personnel, who are usually white even in the hood, parents held a position of authority in their child's education rather than merely being receivers of the information given to them about their child.

Educational and social transformation must originate with those oppressed by its structures (Yull, Wilson, Murray, Parham. 2018). Thus institutional change that benefits immigrant children with disabilities will come only when those that are marginalized and oppressed begin to have a voice that positively impacts them. However, this has to be done in cooperation with school personnel; school personnel must make parents feel valued, and their child cared.

### **Fear of the American School System**

Many undocumented students are not guaranteed access to higher education in the U.S. (Seo, Rocco, Freanch, Kyungjin, 2018), and it is for this reason that sometimes parents are afraid to ask for more help, as they feel that this may lead them to legal trouble in the United States, based on their immigration status. However, under IDEA, every child no matter their residency status has the right to a free and appropriate education. Parents still have the right to advocate for their child with a disability and make sure that their educational needs are being met based on their academic, social, and emotional goals. Without parent advocacy, the implementation of IDEA in schools might be less consistent and or less comprehensive (Trainor, 2010).

Parents are also afraid to advocate for their child because they think that if they say the wrong thing or push too hard, their child will suffer the consequences due to the teachers hating the parents. Asian immigrant parents are unlikely to have a conflict with teachers because they think it is impolite in their culture (Seo et al., 2018). As stated previously, sometimes parents are the receivers of the information about their child's well-being instead of being active participants. Even if the parents do not agree with a specific goal or think something else should be achieved, they will not speak up for fear of repercussion or humiliation from the other team members on their child's case.

### **Lack of Communication with School Personnel**

Effective communication is the key to establish collaborative relationships with immigrant parents of students with disabilities (Seo et al., 2018). Communication is the key towards working for a common goal, it is with communication that parents are able to understand and provide information about their child's disability and the strategies needed to help their child. However, when the communication between teachers and parents is nonexistent, problems that could be prevented or resolved relatively quickly are likely not to be corrected due to the lack of communication between parents and school personnel.

When parents feel they are being heard and that what they have to contribute is honored, they will actively involve themselves in school contexts (McCloskey 2010). If a problem occurs parents have the right under IDEA, to participate in their child's IEP meeting to correct the behavior or issue that is inhibiting their child's educational success. Communication that teachers use to communicate with their parents, should be based on the parents preferred method. There are various ways to do this and thus it is important for teachers to find the best way to communicate with parents. Teachers must take into consideration the parents work-schedule, given

that a lot of immigrant parents do not work 8-5 jobs. Teachers must also consider whether or not parents have access to internet at home or if they are capable of understanding the reports sent home. When parents have active participation in their child's education, their child will receive the benefits of such involvement (Trainor, 2010).

### **Lack of Information Available in their Native Language and Educational Level**

It is not uncommon for parental involvement to consist of parents signing consent forms for evaluations and providing demographic information for [individualized educational plans] IEPs (McCloskey 2010). However, this does not mean that parents know what it is that they are signing or that they wholeheartedly agree with what is on the IEP. Instead immigrant parents tend to do what is told of them to do without asking questions. They rely on information given by friends or family members who may not be well-educated on IEP's or the process their child is undergoing.

[Researchers] have found that the readability of parents rights handbooks exceeded the reading skills of many parents, creating a potential barrier to some parents' ability to advocate (Trainor, 200). Sometimes parents who have a child with a disability, live at or below the poverty line and have not graduated from college or even high school, due the readability of the parents rights handbook is beyond their comprehension. Even when the handbook is provided to them in their language, it is still difficult to read and comprehend what is saying. Immigrant parents sometime rely on one of their kids reading and translating this handbook to them, with the child who is reading or translating the book being at the elementary level.

When presented with information during IEP meetings, immigrant parents usually rely on a translator that they either know or one provided to them by the school. However, translators provided by schools, are not knowledgeable about educational programs and terminology (Seo et al., 2018). Parents also seem to believe that a conflict of interest will occur, since the translator is working for the school, parents believe that not all of the information given to them is correct or even beneficial.

### **Possible Solutions**

While solutions are proposed for resolving this issue, these solutions are not always adopted by parents, or school personnel due to various personal and cultural issues. In the article, *Advocacy for Immigrant Parents of Children with Disabilities*, the authors suggest using Google Translate as a way to translate notes or comments during an IEP meeting, or during parent teacher conferences, however Google Translate is not 100% accurate and thus some information may be misconstrued negatively impacting the information being given during these meetings.

Cultural and personal issues may also affect the solutions proposed. Not every parent has the ability or means to attend the meetings that will discuss the progress of their child. In the article *What do I know? Parental Positioning in Special Education*, a middle-class caucasian woman by the name of Sherry is presented as the type of parent every parents should be: involved, knowledgeable about their child's disability, and prepared to be a team member. However, this is not the norm in every school. Some households require both parents to work to provide a living for their children; some parents are unable to read literature about their child's condition because they simply do not have time or are unable to find resources that will help them.

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### About the Author

Amairany Paniagua is currently working towards receiving her Master of Science in Special Education with an Autism Endorsement from Florida International University. After graduating from Florida Atlantic University with her Bachelor of Arts in Special Education in 2015, Amairany began to teach in the Glades Area located in Palm Beach County, Fl. She decided to give back to her community by coming back to her hometown to educate, motivate, and inspire the new age of young adults graduating from the Glades Area, an area mostly known for its high crime and poverty rate. Her goal in life is to be the best possible teacher she can be. Currently, she is working as a K-2 teacher for children with Autism and enjoys every aspect of her job. When she is not teaching, she is listening to Taylor Swift on repeat and finding new strategies to teach her students.

[To top](#)

## Book Review: How Autism is Reshaping Special Education

By Stephanie Zacharias

“The goal is about how to have students most effectively learn what they need to learn. We can unbundle, unshackle, but more importantly, provide the best experience for each student” (Michael Moe, 6). These are the beliefs of the authors Mark K. Claypool and John M. McLaughlin who are both experts in the field of special education. Claypool founded ChanceLight, which is a school that provides services for education, behavioral health, and therapy. McLaughlin attended the Peabody school of Education at Vanderbilt and is a professor at ChanceLight. He is the author of *Alternative Education’s Impact on Office Disciplinary Referrals*. A comprehensive, well-documented analysis of the current status of disability treatments is laid out.

This book was written to educate parents and raise awareness of the opportunities and services available to their children diagnosed with autism. The theme of this book is autism awareness has laid the groundwork for other areas of disability categorization to push forward and achieve customization for their best outcomes. Claypool and McLaughlin discuss the treatment and diagnosis of autism from a historical perspective of where we were and how we have evolved in the treatment of disabilities in our educational system. They compare the shakeup autism has created to business models such as what uber has done to the taxi industry.

First and foremost, the authors point out that IDEA is broad and has many interpretations. Children cannot neatly fit into IEP checkboxes, which has often been the case in school districts across the nation. Organizations such as Autism Speaks, has been the forefront in bringing awareness to educators. As we know treating autism is an expensive proposition. Autism has pushed for health insurance to cover associated costs with treating the condition. Of course, I believe this opens up a Pandora’s box as to whether autism should be classified as a “disease”. Another viewpoint is: are we shifting the burden of payment from school districts to private health insurers? Coverage is limited with many insurance policies.

In the chapter, Autism, the Catalyst for Change, provides statistics from the CDC saying, “1 in 68 children has autism spectrum disorder” or “1.5% of the student population” (CDC, 2014, 33). Autism Speaks was the leader in bringing awareness to the condition. “It was new, fresh, and embraced the technologies and organizational structures of a well-funded business start-up” (Claypool and McLaughlin, 2017, 36). The authors explain that “the train has left the station” and that “Autism Speaks is in the locomotive that now pulls a train of more than forty states that have passed autism legislation” (Claypool, 2017, 43).

The authors point out the maze and difficulty of how IEPs and IDEA is delivered across the country. Currently, there is no standardization and “each district still approaches special education in an individual way” (Higbee, 54). This is crucial since time and money is wasted when reestablishing children in a new school district.

In the chapter, *Is there a BCBA in the house*, describes when the authors explore the impact of applied behavior analysis. They point out that Autism Speaks has pushed for this form of treatment but they stress, “ABA is a single methodology” (Claypool and McLaughlin, 2017, 74). The authors cause confusion in their presentation of the ABA methodology. Multiple interviews of opposing opinions are presented leaving the reader trying to decipher what is the best route.

The title Unbundling of IDEA that is emphasized on the book cover is perhaps a misnomer. While the cover shows straightened out rope, there is nothing straight about the treatments and direction. It is more like a thorny vine. Autism as the authors explain has added layers to the diagnosis and treatment of the disability. While they point out that autism advocates are loud, impatient and savvy in a social media environment, more paperwork, multiple supporting services, and perplexity have increased. They may have separated autism from other disabilities but confusion as to the best form of treatment still exists.

As leaders in the field of special education, Claypool and McLaughlin understand the power of knowledge. While they have presented copious amounts of information they “understand information becomes knowledge only when it takes on a “social Life”(Fullan, 2001, 78). The authors realize there is a glut of information and the complexities of disseminating it “Identifying the practices usually goes reasonably well, but transferring and using knowledge, the organization flounders” (Fullan, 2001, 79). The authors also attempt to bring coherence to this difficult topic. With the overload of data and competing educational strategies (ABA) they understand change is a necessary process. “Leaders in a culture of change deliberately establish innovative conditions and processes in the first place, and they guide after that” (Fullan, 2001, 115). The authors provide us that guide. The chapter titled *Autism the Catalyst for Change* describes how Autism Speaks goes about affecting change and the role of pacesetters that they have established. Michael Fullan in *Leading a Culture of Change* approaches this concept as “pacesetters must learn the difference between competing in a change marathon and developing the capacity and commitment to solve complex problems” (Fullan, 2001, 37).

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### **About the Author**

I am from Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. I graduated from The University of Alabama in May 2016 with a Bachelor of Science in Education and I am certified in Exceptional Student Education. Upon returning to Florida, my positions have included fifth grade language arts and social studies, and sixth and seventh grade exceptional student education. I currently teach at an elementary school located in West Palm Beach, Florida where I am an inclusion teacher for students in grades three, four, and five. Also, I am in the process of attaining a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Florida International University.

[To top](#)

## Buzz from the Hub

All articles below can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-sept2018-issue2/>

### 1...2...3... CPIR Resources to Take Forward

We can't really say we have "favorite" resources, because it's all been a blur and a flurry, but perhaps we are most proud of these CPIR products, services, and *processes*.

#### [The Hub and Its Library](#)

CPIR's Resource Library has been built in stages, of course, with multiple refinements along the way. It currently boasts more than 1,200 resources relevant to the work you do, in English and Spanish, and it's searchable by topics key to Parent Centers and families.

#### [Parent Center Locator](#)

Did you know that, in the last year, visitors to the Hub logged more than 2.5 million sessions searching for information on disabilities and where to find help and guidance. [Find Your Parent Center](#) has consistently been in the top 10 most-visited CPIR web pages, leading visitors directly to you.

#### [A Year in the Life: Parent Centers in Action](#)

These two resources are all about *you*—what Parent Centers accomplished last year. Show yourselves off with the data captured in the infographic. Adapt the adjustable infographic to display your *own* Center's achievements.

### 4...Co-Creation with Parent Center Staff

The active participation of Parent Centers in CPIR product development is a hallmark of teamwork. We especially prize that so many of you have been involved in assembling multiple **resource collections** and **training curricula** for the rest of the network to use, share, and build on. Many, many thanks for taking the development lead on:

#### [Resource Collection on Behavior Supports and School Discipline](#)

(RPTAC 1 @ SPAN)

#### [Tool Kits for Board Professional Development](#) (RPTAC 4 @ WI-FACETS)

#### [Inclusion Curriculum](#) (RPTAC 3 @ Parent to Parent of GA)

#### [Best Practices in Outreach](#) (Outreach Workgroup)

#### [Juvenile Justice Toolkit](#) (Juvenile Justice Workgroup)

[Disproportionality in Special Education Training Module](#) (Significant Disproportionality Workgroup) | The link above is to the *draft* version available in the BootCamp 2017 workspace (password needed). *Final* version coming soon!



### 5...Collaborations with TA&D Colleagues and Others

CPIR has also worked in concert with other ED-funded projects to share expertise relevant to Parent Centers and the families you serve. To mention but a few...

#### [Getting Ready for When Your Teen Reaches the Age of Majority: A Parent's Guide Series](#)

*Partners* | National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) and the National Post-School Outcomes Center (NPSO)

#### [Act Early Ambassadors and Parent Centers](#) (Webinar)

*Partners* | Act Early Ambassadors of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

#### [ESSA and the Assessment of Students with Disabilities](#)

(Webinar, Stakeholder's Guide to ESSA, multiple fact sheets)

*Partners* | The Advocacy Institute and the National Center on Educational Outcomes

We could go on and on... but we won't. Still, we send our appreciation to our other collaborative partners who lent their expertise to our [Webinar series](#).

### Ending Reflections

We have been truly pleased to provide tools that Parent Centers can use or adapt, platforms that enhance the network's capacity to collaborate with each other, and a way to spotlight the knowledge and skills of Parent Center staff and access each other's know-how. Don't forget to use:

[Survey Item Databank](#) | For ready-made questions for surveys, evaluations, and needs assessment

[Who Knows What?](#) | Capture your skill areas and know-how

[Parent Center Workspaces](#) | Great for joint projects and keeping up with important topics!

## Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET

\* Special Education Instructor (K-12) - Compass Charter Schools is one of California's leading WASC-accredited virtual charter schools of choice. Families from across the state choose us for the 21st century online and home study learning options provided through our cutting-edge curriculum. Success in balancing the development of the whole child is central to our mission and to leading and serving the parents and scholars of California. To learn more - [Click here](#)

\* Special Education Teacher - Chicago, IL - The Invo-Progressus Team has incredible opportunities for Special Education Teachers...or, as we like to call them, Superheroes. We are currently seeking full-time Special Education Teachers in Chicago, IL to provide services in a K-12 school program. For more information - [Click here](#)

\* Special Education Teacher - Philadelphia, PA - The Invo-Progressus Team has incredible opportunities for Special Education Teachers...or, as we like to call them, Superheroes. If you use your super powers to help ensure that children have access to the best education possible in the least restrictive environment, we would love for you to join the Invo-Progressus team! To learn more - [Click here](#)

\* SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - Mountainside, NJ - The Arc Kohler School, Mountainside NJ is a leading collaborative private special education school serving student's preschool age through high school. The Arc Kohler School is seeking a Special Education Teacher to work full-time with their unique population. Full-time, 8:30 A to 3:00 P. To learn more - [Click here](#)

\* Special Education Teacher - Pathways in Education (PIE) is a year round Public Non-Profit Charter School who works alongside their students to design individualized learning plans. We work to effectively meet their unique academic, social-emotional, and scheduling needs through a blended teaching model. The primary responsibility for this position is to provide specialized academic instruction to individual and small groups of students, reinforcing language and reading concepts. To learn more - [Click here](#)

\* Special Education Teacher - The primary responsibility of the SPED teacher is to provide instruction and other related services to Special Education students. The SPED Teacher will also facilitate diagnostic assessment including administration, scoring and interpretation. SPED teachers will review and revise IEP's as needed. To learn more - [Click here](#)

\* Special Education Teacher- Chicago - Jewish Child & Family Services (JCFS) provides vital, individualized, results-driven, therapeutic and supportive services for thousands of children, adults and families of all backgrounds each year. JCFS is currently seeking a Special Education Teacher to work with individuals and small groups of children (K - 12) with emotional and behavior disorders in a therapeutic special education classroom. The Therapeutic Day School is located in West Rogers Park, Chicago, IL. To learn more - [Click here](#)

\* Special Education Teacher- West Chester, PA - The Devereux Pennsylvania Children's Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Services (CIDDS) center serves children, adolescents and young adults – from birth to age 21 – with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and behavioral and emotional disorders. To learn more - [Click here](#)

\* Special Education Teacher - Rivermont Schools are now hiring special education teachers at multiple locations throughout Virginia. Sign on bonus of \$2,000 and relocation assistance of \$5,000 are available for those who qualify. To learn more - [Click here](#)

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[To top](#)