Prepare for Success with Self Advocacy and Assistive Technology

Tools for Life
Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation
Georgia Tech

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Your Speakers Today

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CIDI creates practical solutions that work, with a focus on utility, ease of use, and high quality.

- Accessibility Consulting
- Braille Services
- Captioning Services
- Professional E-Text Producers
- Certified Assistive Technology
Tools for Life

Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, is dedicated to increasing access to and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for Georgians of all ages and disabilities so they can live, learn, work and play independently and with greater freedom in communities of their choice.
What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology (AT) is any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including at school, at work, at home, and in the community.
Assistive Technology is a continuum of tools, strategies, and services that match a person’s needs, abilities, and tasks.

**Low/No-tech**
- pencil grip
- adapted books
- slant board
- highlighters, tape
- magnifiers
- color coding
- read to out loud
- picture schedule
- strategies for memory
- colored transparencies
- proof readers
- note taker
- dry erase board

**Mid-Tech**
- word prediction
- text to speech
- speech to text
- spell checkers
- talking calculators
- digital recorders
- organizers
- e-books
- adapted keyboard
- adapted mouse
- adapted toys
- CCTV
- apps under $100

**High-Tech**
- computer/laptops
- tablets/phablets
- smartphones
- smart pens
- OCR scanner/software
- magnification software
- speech output devices
- switch, joystick access
- scanning access
- voice recognition
- environmental control devices
- apps over $100
Team Approach

- Person with the disability
- Circle of support/Family of choice
- Teachers
- Case Managers
- Technologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Physical Therapist
- Engineer
- Neighbors
- Bus drivers
Why Assistive Technology?

For a person without a disability, assistive technology makes life easier.

For a person with a disability, assistive technology makes life possible.

Tip: USE AT! We have yet to meet a successful person who doesn’t use any AT.
Guiding Principle and Public Law

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:

A. live independently;
B. enjoy self-determination and make choices;
C. benefit from an education;
D. pursue meaningful careers; and
E. enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society in the United States.

Public Law 108-364
Self Advocacy is like Kudzu. Know how to make it grow? Just throw down the seeds and run!

Gail Bottoms
Past President, People First of Georgia
What is Advocacy?

What Is an Advocate?

• An advocate is a person who argues for a cause, a supporter or defender. One that pleads on another’s behalf.

The Advocate Performs Several Functions

• Supports, helps, assists and aids
• Speaks on behalf of others
• Defends and argues for people or causes
• Problem solves and finds solutions agreeable to both sides
What is Self - Advocacy?

Developing self-knowledge is the first step in self-advocacy skills. Learning about one's self involves the identification of learning styles, strengths and weakness, interests, and preferences.

Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to:

- effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights.
- It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions.
We are Among Greatness!

Business executives who pay great sums for consultants to teach them to “think out of the box” would do well to observe the habitually creative thinkers in their midst – people with disabilities.

The necessity of addressing mundane problems with creative solutions has likely prepared many people with disabilities to be innovative in more complex areas, including the challenges faced by school and business.
Why Am I Here Today?
“She won’t and can’t be successful.”

My Parents were advised to put me in a school for individuals with developmental disabilities and took me out the next day when they realized that system was not designed for me.

“I will and can be successful”

Strong self-advocate, always wanting to help others, chosen as peer supporter to other students numerous times in elementary and middle schools. I always had good grades, made honor roll every year!
Success in the affairs of life often serves to hide one's abilities, whereas adversity frequently gives one an opportunity to discover them.

*Horace*
“You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.”

Maya Angelou
Advocacy is Personal and Professional

- NFBGA Atlanta Executive Board
- disABILITY LINK Board Chair
- CDFI Coalition Board
- Inclusive Lending Workgroup Co-Chair
- CLD Community Advisory Council
- ADAPT
Danny’s Advocacy Journey

- Kindergarten
- High school
- College
- IL
- Civil disobedience
- Walking the line
- It all started because of an educator
Who is your biggest advocacy influencer?
Why is self-advocacy important?
When was it difficult to advocate for yourself?
How did you work through it?
Were you involved with your IEP?
Talk about your experience with self advocacy in school or in your everyday life.
“of” vs “for”
Peer Led Organizations

- National Federation of the Blind
- Georgia Coalition of the Blind
- Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard and Hearing
- People First
- ADAPT
- Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association
- Georgia Association of the Deaf
- Centers for Independent Living
Support Agencies in Georgia

• Center for the Visually Impaired
• Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
• Metro Fair Housing
• Georgia Lion’s Lighthouse
• Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
• DBHDD
• ADRCs
• FODAC
Thank you