



*Achieve with us.*

# Self-Determination Begin in the Beginning



## Learn More About The Arc Tennessee's Early Self-Determination Project

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The Arc Tennessee advocates for the rights and full participation of all people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Through our family-based network of members and chapters, we support and empower individuals and families; connect and inform individuals and families; improve support and service systems; influence public policy; increase public awareness; and inspire inclusive communities.

The Arc Tennessee manages by the values: integrity, respect, courage, and justice. Donations to The Arc Tennessee are tax-deductible.

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*The Arc Tennessee values diversity and does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, religion, age, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender, or level of disability.*

**NOTICE**

THIS ENTITY IS A RECIPIENT OF AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT FUNDS. IF YOU HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF ANY ACTIVITY WHICH YOU CONSIDER TO BE ILLEGAL, IMPROPER, OR WASTEFUL, PLEASE CALL THE STATE COMPTROLLER'S TOLL-FREE HOTLINE:  
**1-800-232-5454**

I would like to become a member of The Arc United States, The Arc Tennessee and my local chapter (if there is one in my county.) **This membership is free to TEIS families through 6/30/2011.**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

_____ Individual	\$15.00	_____ Vol. Soc.	\$100.00	I identify myself as:
_____ Family	\$25.00	_____ Sustainer	\$250.00	_____ Self-advocate
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*Make check payable to The Arc Tennessee and mail to 151 Athens Way, Suite 100, Nashville, TN 37228 Contributions are tax deductible.*

## What is Self-Determination?

“Self-Determination” is a skill set that people need to become independent adults, and includes:

- Learning about yourself
- Setting goals
- Making choices
- Solving problems
- Self Monitoring

It is a process that is different for each person, according to what each child wants and needs to create a satisfying and meaningful life.

Self-Determination is both centered on the child and directed by the child.

Families of young children with disabilities can get help learning to teach their very young son/daughter self-determination skills. TEIS professionals can coach families on helping their children learn and practice self-determination skills.



## Why Should My Child Learn Self-Determination?

Making choices, and eventually decisions, is important for all people, including children with disabilities.

The skills leading to enhanced decision-making (goal setting and problem solving) help children to take on greater responsibility and control in their lives.

When children with disabilities show they can make things happen and take responsibility for planning and decision-making, others change how they see them and what they expect from them.

Adults with disabilities say that having control over their lives, instead of having someone else make decisions for and about them, is important to their self-esteem and self-worth. (Ward, 1996)

Research shows that students with disabilities who left school more self-determined, were more than twice as likely as their peers who were not as self-determined to be employed and earning more, one year after graduation.

## Benefits of Beginning Early

- Making Choices, or self-determination, provides a firm foundation for a child’s future.
- With help from their families and teachers, children become better decision-makers, planners, and can learn to speak for themselves.

## The First Step Toward Self-Determination is Making Choices in Daily Routines

- “Do you want to wear a red or striped shirt?”
- “Do you want peas or green beans?”
- “Do you want to play with blocks or dolls?”
- “Do you want to color with a red or blue crayon?”
- “Do you want to play on the slide or the swing?”
- “Do you want me to read to you or sing for you?”
- “Which stuffed-animal do you want to sleep with tonight?”



## “Yes, but my child is not an adult and won’t be for a very long time.”

- This is true but children usually grow up and outlive their parents.
- Children with disabilities deserve opportunities to be the best they can be.
- Rome wasn’t built in a day; families can lay the foundation for a child’s successful life by beginning with self-determination skills.

**Ask TEIS for more assistance and information.**