

Pre-Employment Transition Services: Instruction in Self-Advocacy

Instruction in Self-Advocacy is one of the [five pre-employment transition services \(pre-ETS\) categories](#). Self-advocacy is a student's ability to communicate their wants and needs effectively. Students who can share their interests, desires, and opinions with others clearly are better able to be partners in the post-secondary transition planning process. Instruction in self-advocacy can occur individually or with a group in school, at home, or in the community.

Activities

As with most instruction, instruction in self-advocacy is more effective when provided by multiple providers across a variety of environments. These activities should build students' skills in communication—specifically, the ability to communicate wants and needs and demonstrate self-direction. School staff, families, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and pre-ETS providers should collaborate to determine which activities students need, who can best provide those opportunities, and the best order for students to participate in the activities.

School

- Teach students how to ask for their accommodations and provide opportunities for them to practice
- Provide opportunities for students to lead their meetings (IEP, 504, parent-teacher conferences)
- Encourage students to participate in leadership opportunities in school and after-school clubs and organizations

Pre-ETS Providers

- Provide opportunities for students to participate in mentoring with individuals employed by or volunteering for employers, boards, associations, or organizations in integrated community settings
- Provide a learning-styles inventory to identify preferred learning methods, and review with student and family
- Teach students the skills to speak up for themselves at school, work, and in the community

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

- Prepare students to conduct informational interviews with employers in the student's career cluster of interest
- Review and discuss strengths, challenges, and accommodation needs with the student in areas of community, college, and employment
- Teach self-determination skills

Families

- Discuss how your student's disability impacts them and what supports help them to be successful
- Provide opportunities for your student to make small choices, such as what to wear or eat, and large choices, such as which job shadowing opportunities to participate in or which post-secondary schools to visit
- Support your student in learning ways to stay physically and mentally healthy

Conclusion

Pre-Employment Transition Services provide an opportunity for students to receive early access to instruction on job exploration counseling, workplace readiness skills, postsecondary education counseling, work-based learning, and instruction in self-advocacy. In the area of Self-Advocacy, these activities provide students with instruction and practice on voicing their wants and needs. Coordinated services across home, school, and community settings allow students to build skills that they can generalize across environments as they prepare for life after high school.

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