



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

SSA National Disability Forum
***Financial Independence: Directing the
Management of One's Social Security
Benefits***

Marty Ford
The Arc of the United States
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Selected Principles of Self-Determination

- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)
 - have the same right to self-determination as all people and are entitled to the freedom, authority, and supports to exercise control over their lives.
 - must understand that they can direct and influence circumstances that are important to them. This right to self-determination exists regardless of guardianship status.
- Family members, friends, and other allies play a critical role in promoting self-determination by providing supports and working collaboratively to achieve the individual's goals. Families, friends, and other allies should understand, recognize, and promote the rights and responsibilities of self-determination and respect the limitations on their own authority.
- Service providers, educators, and substitute decision-makers must recognize and respect the individual's right to self-determination and the limitations on their authority.

Selected Principles of Self-Determination, cont.

- People with I/DD must be able to:
 - lead in decision-making and problem-solving about all aspects of their personal lives and have the supports they want to make decisions;
 - advocate for themselves with the assurance that their desires, interests, and preferences will be respected and honored;
 - choose their own supporters, friends, and allies;
 - direct their own supports and services and allocate available resources;
 - hire, train, manage, and fire their own staff;
 - acquire additional skills to assist in determining the course of their lives;
 - use adaptive communications devices and other assistive technology; and
 - take risks to achieve the lives they desire.
- Laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and funding systems should be regularly reviewed and revised to remove barriers and to promote self-determination. People with I/DD must be involved in this process at all levels.

Critical Defining Concepts

- In/formality and flexibility
- Preservation of rights
- Person-centered decisions
- Decision-making supports – broad in scope, individualized, informal, changing, personal relationships
- Supported-decision making – some formal arrangements developing at state level



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Questions?

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