

# Lesson Plans for Teaching Self-Determination



**UAA** Center for  
Human Development  
UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE

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# Lesson 1

## Knowing Yourself



## Lesson Plan #1–Knowing Yourself

**Objective:** Students will be able to express and identify their goals, objectives, dreams, desires, strengths, and weaknesses. They will have the opportunity to discuss their disability and have the ability to identify and express the strengths and weaknesses associated with their disability.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom and Authority

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

Skills for a Healthy Life:

A- A student should be able to acquire a core knowledge related to well-being.

3) understand and identify the causes, preventions, and treatments for diseases, disorders, injuries, and addictions;

B- A student should be able to demonstrate responsibility for the student's well being.

4) develop an awareness of how personal life roles are affected by and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and cultures;

5) understand how personal relationships, including family, friends, and co-workers impact personal well-being;

C- A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others.

3) evaluate how similarities and differences among individuals contributes to relationships;

4) understand how respect for the rights of self and other contributes to relationships;

5) understand how attitude and behavior affect the well-being of self and others;

**Alternate Performance Standards:**

- Manage personal needs '
- Act safely and responsibly '
- Maintain positive interpersonal relationships '
- Contribute meaningfully in the community '

**Activities:**

- **Life Review:** Help students walk through this structured question sheet/interview to help the begin thinking about their dreams, plans, strengths, and weaknesses.
- **My Preferences:** Guide students through this one page learning oriented question sheet. This activity helps students specifically focus on their learning styles and preferences.
- **\*What Do You Know About your Disability and Health Needs:** Guide students through the process of discussing their disability, health needs,

and the implications of both. Be sure to be especially sensitive to boundaries and parents' wishes in this activity.

- **\*Should I Tell? :** This activity is meant to help students decide when it may or may not be appropriate to disclose their disability.
- **Talking to People who Know and Care:** Have teachers, family members, friends, answer the interview questions on the "Talking to People" form. Share the data collected through this process with the student while working through the Life Review, My Preferences, or Circle of Support Activity
- **Circle of Support:** Help student identify their respective Circles of Support to understand who can help them and support them.
- **\*Independence Activity #1:** Discuss the fact that independence can be described in many ways. Some of these ways include:
  - Freedom
  - Making your own decisions
  - Having control, power
  - Choosing your own friends
  - Deciding what to wear
  - Doing what you want to do
  - Doing things without our parents
  - Taking care of yourself
  - Paying your own way

Independence is also something that can be present to different degrees in different areas: mental, physical, or emotional. For example, you might feel that you are completely in control of your thoughts, but not of your body. Limitations to your independence can come from two main sources: other people, and your own physical limitations.

- **\*Independence Activity #2:** Have students take a few minutes to think about the specific needs in their life that they feel hamper their independence. For example, some students may have to ask for help in brushing their hair or emptying their catheter. Some may need help in reaching dishes on a shelf or getting in or out of the car. Some may need help carrying a tray in the cafeteria. Some may need extra time changing classrooms at school. Have students ask themselves:
  - What does independence mean to me?
  - How independent am I in my different activities at home, at school, in my extracurricular life?
  - What things get in the way of my being as independent as I would like to be?
  - How can I deal with the obstacles in my way? Is there any way to get over, around, or under them? Do I need help to do so?

- **Independence Activity #3:** Present the following problem and idea to students. **Problem:** If you need a lot of help because of your disability, how can you still be independent?  
**Idea:** Think of yourself as one of those big executives who runs a conglomerate. The executive makes decisions and others execute them for him. He is independent; he is making the decisions and deciding they will be carried out. He is thoughtful and considerate of those who work for him. *You* are the executive of your life! It doesn't matter if you actually do the driving or comb your hair. *You* make the decisions regarding when and how those things are done in your life!

Learning when to be dependent and when to be independent – and *that each is OK –and is part of learning to be interdependent.*

**Materials:**

- Life Review
- My Preferences
- Instructional Modifications
- What Do You Know About Your Disability?
- Are You Ready to Manage Your Own Healthcare?
- Should I Tell?
- Talking To People Who Know and Care
- Circles of Support

## **LIFE REVIEW**

*Compiled by Becky West and Helen Gritsch  
(used with authors' permission)*

### **WORK**

1. What are your plans for after high school?
2. What jobs interest you?
3. Do you have the skills necessary to perform these jobs?
4. If not, how do you plan on acquiring those skills?
5. What skills do you have?
6. What job salary would you like to earn?
7. Do the jobs that interest you pay the salary you would like?
8. What job experiences have you had in the past?
9. Do you want your job to bring you power and recognition?
10. Would you prefer that your job is the same every day, or one that provides some daily variety?
11. Is it important that your job keeps you learning new things?
12. Would you prefer to know exactly what is expected of you on the job?
13. Do you like working with others or alone?

14. Do you like working with your hands or your mind?
15. Is it important that your job is socially useful?
16. Do you need a job where you can use your creativity?
17. What kind of environment would you prefer working in (i.e., plush offices, outside, warehouse etc.)?
18. How much responsibility do you want at work?
19. How would you deal with a boss who you think has treated you unfairly?
20. How would you deal with a boss who yells at you a lot?
21. How do you deal with a boss who doesn't give you directions on what to do?
22. Do you work best on your own schedule or one directed by your employer?
23. Do you like to give directions or to be given directions?
24. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?
25. Where do you see yourself 25 years from now?

## **MONEY**

1. What value do you place on money?
2. Do you think a portion of your salary should be used to help others?



3. If you had enough money, would you retire now?
4. If you see something you want, do you want to be able to buy it immediately or are you willing to save for it?
5. What percentage of your monthly income needs to be put into your savings account?
6. If your car is safe and runs well does it matter to you what it looks like?
7. Does your salary indicate how successful you are?
8. Is it important to save for retirement?

## **MARRIAGE**

1. When you are an adult, who do you see included in your family?
2. What does commitment mean to you?
3. What is a good age to get married?
4. If you plan to marry, what qualities are you looking for in a mate?
5. If you plan on children, how many and at what age will you have them?
6. Will you and your spouse both work after marriage? Do you think you will both?
7. Would you or your spouse stay at home and be a full time parent if it meant never owning a house?
8. Who will care for your children if both you and your spouse work?

9. Should your children be given money? If so, at what age and how much?
10. Do you think both husbands and wives should share in parenting and housework?
11. How will you split responsibilities?
12. How do you think money should be handled in the family?
13. Do husbands and wives share equal rights in the family?
14. How do you plan on disciplining your children?

## **PHILOSOPHY**

1. What do you believe in?
2. What things in life are important to you?
3. What are your religious beliefs?
4. What are your political beliefs?
5. How do you define success in terms of:  
your family?  
  
work?  
  
society?  
  
personal happiness?

6. How would you respond to: I would like to be remembered for.....

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. What hobbies do you enjoy?

2. What sports do you enjoy?

3. How do you spend your free time?

4. In what areas of your entire life do you feel most competent?

5. In what areas would you like to improve your competence?

6. What things are you committed to (family, graduating, etc.)?

7. What kind of support system do you have?

8. How do you deal with stress?

9. How do you manage your time?

10. How do you set priorities?

11. Where do you want to live:

city, town, rural?

geographic area?

climatic area?

apartment, house?

12. How do you make decisions?

13. Describe yourself in 3 words.

## **SCHOOL**

1. What do you think high school will be like?

2. What subject do you like best?

3. What subject do you like least?

4. Which makes it easiest for you to learn: seeing it done, hearing it, reading it, or doing it?

5. Describe your leisure and extra-curricular activities.

6. Who is in your family? What are their ages?

7. What jobs do your parents do?

8. How long have you known your best friend?

9. What kind of qualities do you look for in a friend?

10. Who do you go to when you need to talk to someone?

11. What is your first and immediate response when people yell at you?

12. Describe 2 goals you would like to accomplish this year.

## **ARE YOU READY TO MANAGE YOUR OWN HEALTH CARE?**

- |     |                                                                                          |     |    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1.  | I worry about my health.                                                                 | Yes | No |
| 2.  | My parents always take care of my health needs.                                          | Yes | No |
| 3.  | I would like to know more about my illness/disability.                                   | Yes | No |
| 4.  | I would like to be responsible for taking my own medications or doing my own treatments. | Yes | No |
| 5.  | It is easy for me to talk with my doctor.                                                | Yes | No |
| 6.  | I feel I have little or no control over my illness/disability.                           | Yes | No |
| 7.  | I would like to speak with my doctor alone during visits.                                | Yes | No |
| 8.  | I would like to go to the doctor by myself.                                              | Yes | No |
| 9.  | Sometimes I get embarrassed if I have to take my medications in front of my friends.     | Yes | No |
| 10. | If I follow my treatments and take my medications, my health is usually good.            | Yes | No |
| 11. | My health needs will affect my future.                                                   | Yes | No |



## INSTRUCTIONAL MODIFICATIONS

### **READING**

- Extended time
- Reader
- Taped textbooks
- Oral exams
- Taped exams
- Separate location
- Alternate test format
- Other:

### **WRITING/SPELLING**

- Extended time
- Notetaker
- Tape recorder
- Oral exams
- Computer with spell-check
- Alternative demonstration of mastery
- Scribe
- Proofreader
- Other:

### **LANGUAGE**

- Extended time
- Notetaker
- Tape recorder
- Oral exams
- Computer with spell-check
- Alternative demonstration of mastery
- Scribe
- Proofreader
- Other:

### **MATH**

- Extended time
- Use of calculator
- Talking calculator
- Separate location
- Alternate test format
- Other:

### **AUDITORY**

- Tape recorder
- Notetaker
- Visual clues
- Physical proximity
- Other:

### **VISUAL/PERCEPTUAL**

- Tape recorder
- Taped textbooks
- Auditory cues
- Physical proximity
- Extended time
- Oral/taped exams
- Separate location
- Alternate test format
- Proofreader
- Other:

## PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS

- Extended time to complete a program
- Adapting methods of instruction
- Course substitution
- Part-time rather than full-time study

## MY PREFERENCES

How do I learn best? (listening, reading doing) \_\_\_\_\_

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What size of group is best for me? \_\_\_\_\_

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What kind of tests are best for me? \_\_\_\_\_

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What kind of aids help me? (tape recorder, friend taking notes, tutoring, extra time)

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What type of environment would I most like to work in? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do I like working with others or by myself? \_\_\_\_\_

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Would I rather work with people, data, or things? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is my best talent?

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Adapted from EXCELLenterprises Lawrence, Kansas (used with author's permission)



## TALKING TO PEOPLE WHO KNOW AND CARE: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Name of Person Interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship (Family, friend, co-worker, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known “\_\_\_\_\_”?

How much time do you spend with “\_\_\_\_\_” every week?

What do you like the most about “\_\_\_\_\_”?

What do you admire the most about “\_\_\_\_\_”?

When was the last time you had fun together? What did you do?

What would “\_\_\_\_\_’s” best day be like?

What would “\_\_\_\_\_’s” worst day be like?

Other Comments:

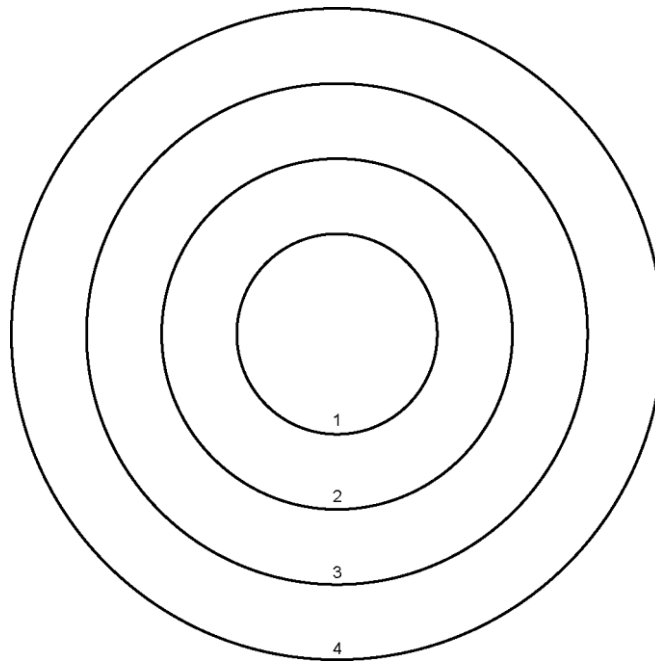
## **WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR DISABILITY?**

1. Do you know your diagnosis?
2. Do you know the possible causes of your disability?
3. What are the symptoms of you disability? How did your doctor reach his/her diagnosis?
4. Are there ways to manage the symptoms?
5. If you are taking prescribed medication(s), do you know the kind of medication(s) and dosage(s)?
6. Do you know the side effects of the medication(s) you may be taking?
7. Do you believe you will recover from your disability?
8. What possible treatment for your disability have been discussed by your doctor, treatment team, etc., with you?
9. Do you understand what the Treatment Plan is?
10. What information would you like to have concerning your disability?

## CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

A Circle of Support is a group of people who provide friendship and support for an individual. Frequently these groups agree to meet on a regular basis to help a person accomplish certain personal visions and goals. The members of a circle are usually friends, family members, teachers, neighbors, and service providers. People involved in the Circle of Support are involved because they care about the focus person.

This exercise is a social scan. It will give you a quick picture of who is in your life. This exercise is very useful in clarifying who you can rely upon to provide support and advice when you need it.

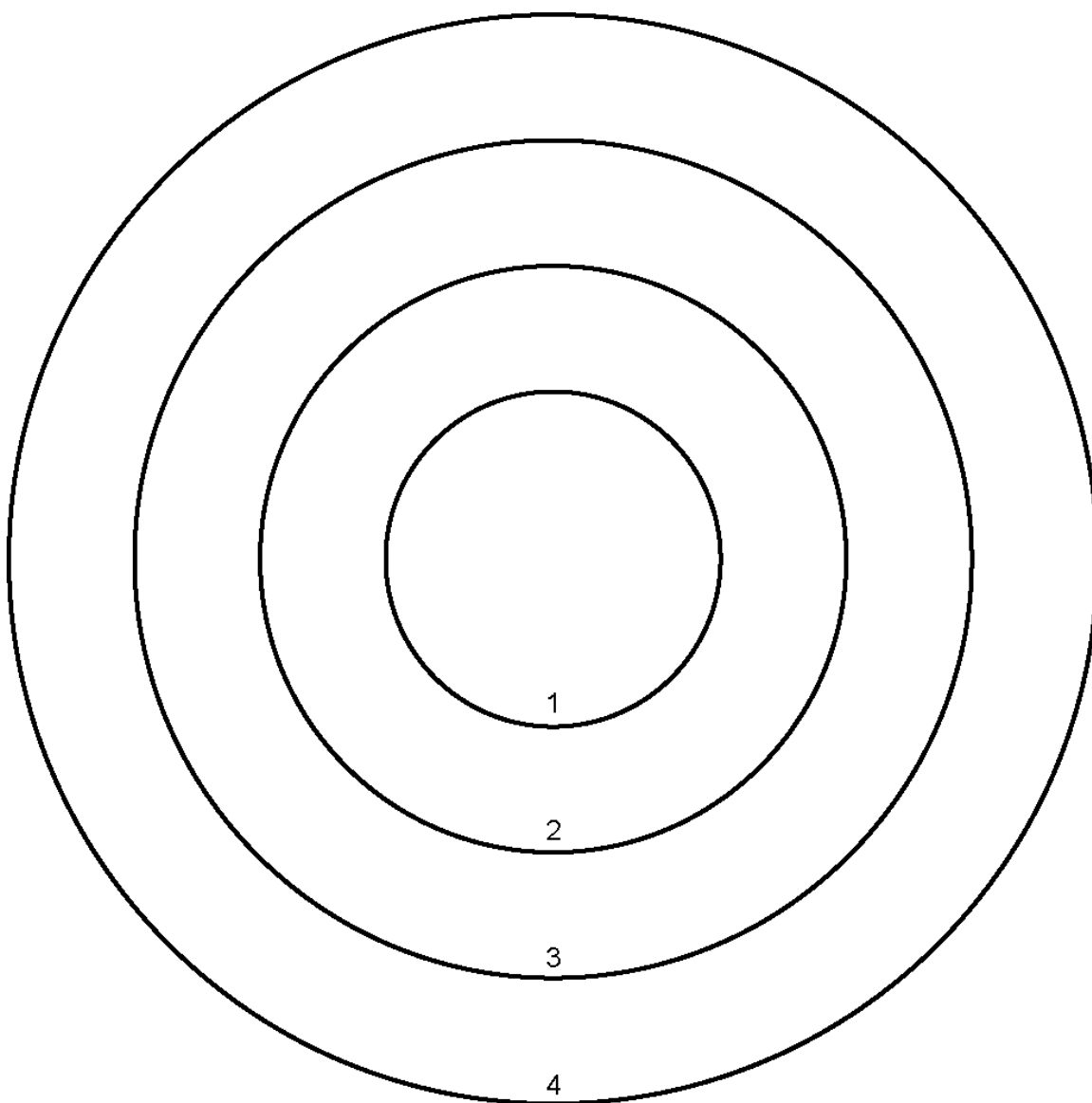


***Instructions: Write your name in center; fill in the circles according to the guidelines below.***

- 1<sup>st</sup> Circle: List the people most intimate in your life—those you cannot imagine living without.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle: List good friends—those who almost made the first circle.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle: List people, organizations, networks you are involved with—people and groups you participate with and in.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Circle: List people you PAY to provide services in your life.

*\*Note: People can be in more than one circle. Example: your doctor or your teacher could also be a very close friend etc.*

Circle of Support for: \_\_\_\_\_



# Lesson 2

## Communication Styles



## **Lesson Plan #2—Communication Styles**

**Objective:** To identify and demonstrate different verbal and nonverbal communication styles.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom, authority

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

### English/Language Arts:

A – A student should be able to speak and write well for a variety of purposes and audiences.

3) in speaking, demonstrate skills in volume, intonation, and clarity;

6) when appropriate, use visual techniques to communicate ideas; these techniques may include role playing, body language, mime, sign language, graphics, Braille, art, and dance;

E – A student should understand and respect the perspectives of others in order to communicate effectively.

1) use information, both oral and written, and literature of many types and cultures to understand self and others;

### Skills for a Healthy Life:

B – A student should be able to demonstrate responsibility for the student's well-being.

2) demonstrate a variety of communication skills that contribute to well-being;

C – A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others.

1) resolve conflicts responsibly;

2) communicate effectively within relationships;

D – A student should be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

6) use various methods of communication to promote community well-being.

### **Alternate Performance Standards**

#### Language Arts:

- Use verbal and non-verbal communication to convey information, needs, and wants;
- Respond to environmental, social, oral, or visual cues;
- Modify communication according to social and cultural norms.

#### Skills For A Healthy Life:

- Maintain positive interpersonal relationships;
- Contribute meaningfully in the community.

### Activities:

- **Feelings:** using the activity sheet as a springboard, identify things that prompt certain emotional responses in student(s) and connect with the accompanying body language. Teacher may want to model different verbal and nonverbal expressions to get students started. *(Have fun with this part. It's a good place to go "over the top." The more exaggerated the body language, the more likely your students will engage in a constructive manner.)*
- Using the **"How To Talk to People"** handout, define the differences between nonassertive (passive), aggressive, and assertive communication. As you review the handout with students, stop to role-play each style. Model for students first, and then encourage them to demonstrate an example of the three styles.
- **Charades:** Use the following adaptation of the party game "Charades" to practice verbal and non-verbal communication styles. On index cards write simple scenarios for students to act out in teams of 2-3. The scenario should include the kind of communication style you want them to illustrate. Place the cards in a container from which the players will draw. Set up teams (should be at least two but not more than five people per team). Each team draws one card per round until all the cards are gone. **Do this prior to the acting portion of the game.** The teams have three tasks: (1) to determine how to act out the scenario on the card; (2) selecting the actors and acting it out for the other teams, and (3) identifying the communication style that's being demonstrated. When a team thinks they know the style being demonstrated they hold up a green card. If correct, they are awarded a point. Play continues to rotate so that each team has an opportunity to act out one or more of their cards. If desired, the class can determine a time limit for each role play. *This is a good activity to have set up to play during odd moments as a filler.*

### Materials:

- Feelings activity sheet;
- Video clips from popular TV programs to illustrate the effects of different kinds of body language and expressions;
- "How To Talk To People" student handout;
- "Let Your Body Say Positive Things About You" student handout;
- Index cards with scenarios written on them; a green card for each team; a timer (if desired).

## LET YOUR BODY SAY POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT YOU

Before you even open your mouth, your body is announcing to others that you are either Showing confidence in yourself or not.

### Showing confidence means you:

1. stand straight and looks people in the eye when speaking with them
2. sit down in a relaxed, but businesslike manner
3. keep eye contact with people when conversing with them
4. take the initiative in greeting others at a meeting and in opening the conversation
5. are not afraid to sit next to the most powerful person in the room
6. don't wait for permission to speak before speaking up
7. are organized and carry the materials you need to class or to meetings, spread them on the table, and have the needed information at the fingertips
8. are dressed appropriately
9. are courteous and pleasant during discussion.

### Not showing confidence means you:

1. slump when standing and seems afraid to look at you when talking to you
2. sit down as though sitting on eggs, too self-conscious to move
3. are uncomfortable if someone is looking at you for more than an instant
4. are afraid to take the initiative in greeting people and waits for others to give permission to say "hello"
5. sit inconspicuously – away from persons perceived as powerful or threatening
6. are afraid to speak unless spoken to and given specific permission to speak
7. seldom carry information or materials to meetings
8. are either under- or overdressed, for a picnic or a party
9. become unpleasant, argumentative or rude when expressing a viewpoint.



Reprinted with permission from "How to Get Services by Being Assertive" published by the Family Resource Center on Disabilities, Chicago, IL, 1993.



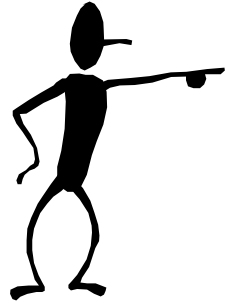
## HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Three Styles of Communication:

Nonassertive (passive)



Aggressive



Assertive



In order to get what you want, you must be able to tell people what you want in a way that helps them to want to listen. How you say something, or your style of communication, is very important.

Let's look at three common styles of communication and see which one is best.

### Non-assertive (passive)

You are being non-assertive or passive when you:

- do not stand up for what is best for you
- do not let other people know what you need or want

- let other people decide what is best for you

When you are nonassertive or passive:

- you stand or sit slumped down
- you look at the floor and your feet
- you mumble



After being nonassertive or passive you feel bad because:

- you feel controlled by other people
- you feel little
- you feel helpless

When you are nonassertive or passive, other people see you as:

- little
- not able to make decisions
- always needing help
- childish

Being nonassertive is not a good way to communicate.

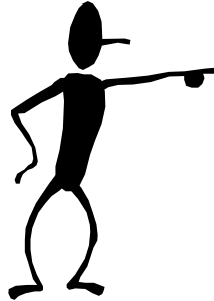
### **Aggressive**

You are aggressive when you:

- want to win at any cost
- are pushy
- put down other people
- don't listen to or respect other people's feelings or ideas

When you are aggressive:

- you stand too close to people
- you clench your fists
- you talk too loudly or shout



After being aggressive you feel bad because:

- you feel angry
- you feel alone
- you feel people don't like you
- people avoid you

When you are aggressive other people see you as:

- a loudmouth
- a troublemaker
- childish and immature

Being aggressive is not a good way to communicate.

### **Assertive**

You are assertive when you:

- stand up for what is best for you
- make sure other people understand what you need or want
- openly and honestly express your ideas and feelings
- respect other people's rights and ideas
- listen to other people

When you are assertive '

- you stand tall
- you look people in the eye
- you speak clearly
- you listen with interest



After being assertive you feel good because:

- you feel honest and respected
- you feel proud

When you are assertive other people see you as:

- an adult
- able to make decisions
- able to do things
- independent
- honest

Being assertive is a good way to communicate.

## FEELINGS

<b>What makes you upset?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What makes you happy?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What makes you angry?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What scares you?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What amuses you?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What makes you mischievous?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What makes you bored?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What makes you grateful?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What makes you disgusted?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>
<b>What makes you secretive?</b>	<b>How does that look?</b>

# Lesson 3

## Assertiveness Skills



## **Lesson Plan #3—Assertiveness Skills**

**Objective:** Demonstrate the elements of assertive communication skills and benefits to students.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom and authority

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

### Skills for a Healthy Life:

B – A student should be able to demonstrate responsibility for the student’s well-being.

2) demonstrate a variety of communication skills that contribute to well-being;

C – A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others.

1) resolve conflicts responsibly;

2) communicate effectively within relationships;

D – A student should be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

6) use various methods of communication to promote community well-being.

### **Alternate Performance Standards:**

- Maintain positive interpersonal relationships;
- Contribute meaningfully in the community.

### **Activities:**

- Review elements of verbal and nonverbal communication for passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior. Distribute handout “*Being Assertive Is Not My Style*” to compare and contrast non-assertive behaviors. Role play several of the ten characters. Some students may choose to illustrate characters in comic book fashion.
- Set up teams of 2-4 students each. Give each team markers and a large sheet of paper (butcher paper or a flipchart pad). On the board draw a sample “T” chart with “assertiveness is...” above one column and “assertiveness is not...” above the other. As a large group, brainstorm three or four possible things to go in column. When it’s clear the group has a grasp of comparison you’re looking for, instruct the small groups to brainstorm as many examples for each column as they can. Give the teams at least 10 minutes and circulate to monitor progress. Have teams post sheets around the room. Plan to leave these up as a reminder while working on communication skills. You may want to have individual teams report on the top three things they identified as what assertiveness is and is not. Distribute student handout “Assertiveness Is/Is Not...” and

- compare to student-generated lists. Discuss similarities and differences in responses.
- Tell students, “You are what you think you are. Start thinking assertively and you will become the assertive person you want to be.” On the board write “**I wish I were more...**” Then ask for volunteers to complete the sentence. Alternately, students could write their responses. Ask them to think about just one thing they would like to be more assertive about and complete the sentence “**I can be more assertive about \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.**” Invite willing volunteers to share their answers.

**Materials:**

- Being Assertive Is Not My Style student handout;
- Large paper (flip chart or butcher paper); markers;
- Assertiveness Is/Is Not... student handout



## BEING ASSERTIVE IS NOT MY STYLE

If being assertive is not your style – What is your style?

Are you a:

1. **Nice Lady** – who is afraid to say anything or do anything that might offend anyone – especially bureaucrats, because they will call you other names instead of “nice lady”?
2. **Whiner** – who constantly whines and complains about:
  - a. The services you need and are not receiving?
  - b. How bureaucrats treat you when you ask for services?
  - c. How professionals treat you when you try to discuss your progress (or lack of progress)?
  - d. How bad everything is – but never does anything about it?
3. **Clinging Vine** – who clings to others and expects them to stick up for your rights and intervene on your behalf? '
4. **Silent Victim** – who has resigned herself to lack of needed services because “there’s nothing I can do about it”?
5. **Fairy Princess** – who expects everything to happen, and every service to be delivered without any effort on your part.
6. **Waiter** – who waits for a miracle to happen, for something someone promised, who waits and waits and waits for someone else to do something.
7. **Bombshell** – who fires angry missiles sporadically, instead of calmly and methodically building a good case for what you need?
8. **Scaredy Cat** – afraid that “if I make trouble they’ll get back at me”?
9. **Appeaser** – who compromises your needs because “if I ask for too much they won’t give me anything”?
10. **Sellout Self-advocate** – who makes deals with bureaucrats to get services for himself and pressures others not to rock the boat?

## **ASSERTIVENESS IS... ASSERTIVENESS IS NOT... '**

**What is assertiveness?** There are many definitions and many examples of assertiveness. We offer the following as a sample.

### **Assertiveness is:**

1. expressing your needs clearly and directly
2. expressing your ideas without feeling guilty or intimidated
3. sticking up for what you believe you need – even though professionals may not agree
4. knowing your rights and how to get them
5. documenting what you need and all facts pertaining to your case
6. collaborating with service providers and treating them like partners
7. effective communication
8. conveying your feelings of self-confidence when you communicate with others
9. advocating effectively on your own behalf
10. self-reliance and independence
11. persisting until you get all the services you need
12. analyzing a problem and pinpointing the area of responsibility before you act
13. agitating to get necessary legislation passed and implemented
14. organizing for change
15. having a positive attitude at all times
16. being strong when others are weak
17. joining others who are organizing for change
18. taking pride in your accomplishments
19. having the courage to dream and developing the skills to make those dreams come true

### **Assertiveness is not:**

1. beating around the bush before stating your needs
2. feeling too guilty or afraid to express your needs
3. agreeing with professionals – no matter how you feel – because “professionals know what’s best”
4. ignorance about your rights
5. leaving everything to others because “they know how to do these things”
6. accepting inappropriate or inadequate services because it’s easier to let professionals handle things
7. ineffective communication
8. begging for what is legitimately yours by law
9. abdicating to others your right to self-advocate

10. reliance and dependence on others
11. giving up when you run into red tape
12. acting precipitously before you get all the facts
13. letting the politicians “take care of laws and all that political stuff”
14. accepting the status quo because “nothing can be done”
15. giving in to defeat
16. being swayed by others who have a “no win” attitude
17. acting “only” on behalf of yourself
18. being uncomfortable about your accomplishments
19. refusing to dream



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# Lesson 4

## Applying Assertiveness Skills



## **Lesson Plan #4—Applying Assertiveness Skills**

**Objective:** Student will practice using assertive communication skills appropriately in various situations.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom and authority

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

### Skills for a Healthy Life:

B – A student should be able to demonstrate responsibility for the student’s well-being.

2) demonstrate a variety of communication skills that contribute to well-being;

C – A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others.

1) resolve conflicts responsibly;

2) communicate effectively within relationships;

D – A student should be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

6) use various methods of communication to promote community well-being.

### ***Alternate Performance Standards***

- Maintain positive interpersonal relationships;
- Make choices and advocate for self and others.

### **Activities:**

- Review elements of passive, aggressive, and assertive communication styles. Ask students to practice expressing themselves using assertive, passive, and aggressive communication styles with the following statements: “It’s time for me to leave,” “No, I don’t want to join your club,” and “It certainly is warm in here.” Remember to include prompts for appropriate nonverbal communication that goes with each style. Ask them to respond to the question, “Do you mind if I smoke?” using each of the different styles.
- **Categories of assertive behavior:** Explain to students that we use assertive communication in three general areas: saying “no,” expressing feelings, and requesting information, products, or services. Distribute the three handouts “Categories of Assertive Behavior,” “Tips For Being Assertive,” and “Speaking Up For Yourself.” Review handouts together and clarify any points students are having difficulty grasping. Model examples for students with the assistance of self-advocates from the community.

- **Role play and peer evaluation:** Pair students to apply assertiveness skills. Explain that each person will take a turn acting out a different situation from the “Role playing Assertive Behavior” sheet. The other person will use the “Assertive Behavior Checklist” to provide feedback about what the student did well in their role play.

**Materials:**

- Categories of Assertive Behavior, student handout
- Tips for Being Assertive, student handout
- Speaking Up for Yourself, student handout
- Role-playing Assertive Behavior sheet; self-advocate(s) from the community to assist with role play activities; '
- Assertive Behavior Checklists '

## CATEGORIES OF ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

### 1. Refusal Assertiveness – How to say no at the right time and in the right way

- ◆ State your position – “No, I can’t.”
- ◆ Explain your reason – “I have something else to do that day.”
- ◆ Express understanding – “I hope you can find something else.”

### 2. Expressing Feelings – telling people how you feel

- ◆ Express positive feelings – “You did a great job.”
- ◆ Express negative feelings – “I am upset by what you did.”

### 3. Request Assertiveness – To get information, clarification, and ask for what you want

- ◆ State the problem – “Boss, you have given two different instructions.”
- ◆ Make a request – “Can you let me finish one project before starting the other?”
- ◆ Getting clarification – “Can you explain what you want done again?”



## **TIPS FOR BEING ASSERTIVE**

**EYE CONTACT** – Make sure the person is more interesting than what is on the floor. Look at the person most of the time. But, do not stare at people 100 percent of the time.

**BODY POSTURE** – Try to face the person. Stand or sit up tall. But, don't be a stiff board.

**DISTANCE/PHYSICAL CONTACT** – If you smell or feel the other person's breath, you are probably too close. Keep a comfortable distance.

**GESTURES** – Use hand gestures to add to what you are saying, but remember that you are not conducting an orchestra.

**FACIAL EXPRESSIONS** – Your face should match your emotion and what you are saying. Don't laugh when you are upset and don't have a frown when you are happy. A relaxed, pleasant face is best when you are happy. A relaxed, serious face is best when you are upset.

**VOICE TONE, INFLECTION, and VOLUME** – When you are making an assertive message, you want to be heard. In order to be heard you have to pay attention to the tone of your voice (happy, whiny, upset), the inflection of our voice (emphasis on syllables), and volume of your voice (whisper to yell).

**FLUENCY** – It is important to get out your words in an efficient manner. If a person stammers or rambles on, the listener gets bored.

**TIMING** – When you are expressing negative feelings or making a request of someone, this is especially important. Seven days later may be too long. Doing it right on the spot in front of people may not be the right time to do it. Do it as soon as there is a time for both parties to resolve their issues alone.

**LISTENING** – An important part of assertiveness. If you are making statements that express your feelings without infringing on the rights of others, you need to give the other person a chance to respond.

**CONTENT** – What a person says is one of the most important parts of the assertive message. Depending on what a person is trying to accomplish, the content is going to be different.



## **SPEAKING UP FOR YOURSELF**

Start thinking for yourself: It's important that you realize that you are unique, a one-of-a-kind person, an individual. Feel comfortable about the style in which you assert yourself. Some people speak very loudly and enthusiastically; people hear them clearly. Some people speak more softly and infrequently; they are heard equally clearly. Do not change your style. The key is to put into words exactly what you want or need.

Some general tips on being heard:

- Look the person you are talking to in the eye. If you are short or use a wheelchair, you will sometimes have to draw attention to yourself by speaking directly to the person. If he or she seems unwilling to look at you, you might find some clever – yet polite – way to say, “I’m right here!” How you do that will depend on your personality. For someone who is extroverted, that might mean carrying a red bandana to wave. For someone who is more introverted, that might mean speaking in a louder, stronger voice.
- Speak clearly and distinctly in whatever way you can. If you have a speech disability, calm your anxiety by trying to relax the muscles in your body, taking in deep breaths of air and exhaling slowly. Speak slowly and as distinctly as you can. Sometimes it helps to calm you by visualizing a soothing image, such as a mountain stream or a quiet meadow in springtime. You will find that your whole body will relax and that you will be able to focus on your thoughts and your message. If you are calm, the other person will relax and be able to concentrate on what you are saying. If you use a speech synthesizer to speak, you may want to give the person a little note explaining this device. You will think of other ways to communicate.
- Be courteous and polite; say “please” and “thank you.”
- Do not be overly polite (obsequious).
- If the person addresses everyone around you, but not you, tell the person nicely and firmly that you speak for yourself and that you would like to be addressed directly.
- Think about what you want to say and how you want to say it before you begin speaking.

Note: Assertiveness also means that you don't attack others in stating your needs. For instance, you don't berate the store clerk because the counters are too high for you to see over. That complaint will need to be given to the store owner/manager.

Assertiveness means that you stand up for yourself in an adult, responsible way. It is not aggressive; it is not passive. Remember to keep the balance! And to be yourself!

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## **Role Playing Assertive Behavior**

It helps to practice a new skill before you have to really use it. Pair up with another student and take turns acting out the situations below. Remember to include the nonverbal (facial expressions, posture, body language) as well as the words you'd say in the situation you are acting out.

1. A salesman is trying to sell you an encyclopedia that you don't want.
2. Another student wants to copy the homework you did last night for his/her own assignment.
3. You are at work and your boss has given you instructions to do something that you don't understand.
4. You want to go to the movies, but the theater is not accessible and you use a wheelchair.
5. You want to give a staff person who works with you positive feedback about something they've done.
6. You want to tell your parents that you want to be included in your IEP planning meeting.
7. A stranger you encounter while waiting for a plane has just said something rude about your disability.
8. You want to start working with teachers, staff, and family to plan what your life will be like when you get out of school.
9. You want to manage your own money but need assistance with coming up with a budget.
10. You want to attend the next city council meeting but need information before the meeting so that you understand the topic that's going to be discussed.
11. You want to vote in the next election but need assistance understanding the issues and how to cast your vote.
12. You are upset because the paratransit bus was late picking you up and you missed a job interview.
13. You want to ask your boss at work for more responsibility.

## ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

**Directions:** Write an X in the box next to the skill you see your partner demonstrating.

Role Player's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Did the player:

1. Face the other person?	
2. Look the other person in the eyes?	
3. Use good voice tone?	
4. Use good facial expression?	
5. Use good body posture?	
6. Use good listening skills?	
7. Speak clearly and distinctly in whatever way he/she can?	
8. Treat the other person with courtesy and basic respect?	
9. Ask for what he or she wants?	
10. State reasons?	
11. Say thanks or ask for a different solution?	
12. Say thanks or ask for time to think it over?	

What did the player do really well?

What can the player do better next time?

# Lesson 5

## Listening Skills



## **Lesson Plan #5—Listening Skills**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate aspects of active listening and incorporate those skills into assertiveness and negotiation techniques.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom, authority

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

### Skills for a Healthy Life:

B – A student should be able to demonstrate responsibility for the student’s well-being.

2) demonstrate a variety of communication skills that contribute to well-being;

C – A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others.

1) resolve conflicts responsibly;

2) communicate effectively within relationships;

D – A student should be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

6) use various methods of communication to promote community well-being.

### **Alternate Performance Standards:**

- Maintain positive interpersonal relationships;
- Contribute meaningfully in the community.

### **Activities:**

- Pair students up with another person and have him/her speak to them nonstop for a full minute (any subject matter). When the minute is up, the listener has to repeat back as closely as possible what the speaker just said. Discuss what was actually heard and what was missed. Change roles and repeat process.
- Explore discussion questions. Explain the importance of effective listening as a component of self-advocacy, assertiveness, and negotiation skills. Identify and model body language and verbal responses associated with active listening (making eye contact, nodding, posture, paraphrasing, reflecting back).
- Pair students up again and this time the speaker is to describe him/herself to the listener. The speaker should plan to talk for one minute. When finished, the listener paraphrases what was said. The speaker provides feedback on the listening skills (facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture) he/she observed. Switch roles and repeat.
- Have students practice using brief verbalized expressions of interest and understanding in the next scenario (“I see,” “Yes, really?” “That’s

interesting.” “Great” and so on). Change partners and the speaker this time should describe their plans for the weekend and why they intend to do certain things. Continue to practice back and forth in this manner, expanding the range of skills used. Students should begin to use comment to continue or expand a conversation (“I’d like to hear more about that,” “What happened next?” “What will you do about that?” “Let’s discuss that now”), paraphrasing, and reflecting the mood of another person (“You seem sad about that,” “You look angry,” “You seem tired,” “You sound very pleased with the way things have turned out.”)

**Materials:**

- Kitchen timer and discussion questions:
  - Did you listen intently enough to be able to repeat the speaker’s statement reasonably accurately?
  - Did you find it hard to concentrate?
  - Was your mind wandering and preparing the next thing to say?
  - Did you listen intently enough to be able to repeat the speaker’s statement reasonably accurately?
  - Did you find it hard to concentrate?
  - Was your mind wandering and preparing the next thing to say?

# Lesson 6

## Handling Feedback



## **Lesson Plan #6—Handling Feedback**

**Objective:** Students will develop a repertoire of skills for discriminating between feedback and criticism and appropriate responses to each.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom, authority, responsibility and respect

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

Skills for a Healthy Life:

B – A student should be able to demonstrate responsibility for the student's well-being.

2) demonstrate a variety of communication skills that contribute to well-being;

C – A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others.

1) resolve conflicts responsibly;

2) communicate effectively within relationships;

D – A student should be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

6) use various methods of communication to promote community well-being.

**Alternate Performance Standards:**

- Maintain positive interpersonal relationships;
- Contribute meaningfully in the community.

**Activities:**

- Open a dialogue with student by posing the following questions: *How do you feel when somebody criticizes you? How do you feel when someone tells you something that you need to hear? How do you feel when criticizing others? How do you usually react when you feel criticized? How would you like to act when being criticized?* Help students distinguish between criticism (negative statements that do not provide information for improvement) and constructive feedback (statements that explain the problem and how it might be corrected). Provide several examples, either verbally or on the board, and ask students to determine whether the statements are criticism or feedback.
- Distribute student handout and review together. Clarify any confusing language or concepts. Have students apply the three steps in the following manner. After you describe a situation where a student is being criticized, encourage the students to visualize what they will say and do. Tell students to next talk through what they will say and do. Finally, ask several volunteers to act out the situation for the rest of the class.



- Brainstorm a list of ways students have felt criticized recently. Divide them into teams of threes, with one person giving the criticism, one person receiving, and an observer to identify positive aspects of the student's response to criticism. Have the teams select a scenario from the brainstorm list and role play it in their team. Following the role play the observer provides feedback and identifies what the receiver did well and what they may want to practice for the next time. Team members switch roles and repeat the process with a new scenario. When available, videotape the role plays for self-assessment later.

**Materials:**

- Criticism—Don't Let It Get To You student handout;
- student-generated brainstorm list of incidents of criticism; Video equipment if desired.

## CRITICISM—DON'T LET IT GET TO YOU



There are three ways to handle criticism assertively. Each way is designed to help you deal with the criticism so that you can make a decision about what behavior, if any, you will change.

The three ways of handling criticism are:

1. ***If there is truth in the criticism, agree with it.*** There is always the possibility that there is some truth in what others say about you. For example, somebody might say to you, “You are always sticking your nose into other people’s business.” You might reply with, “Yes, sometimes I get too involved with other people’s business.”
2. ***If you have made a mistake, acknowledge assertively what you did.*** Remember, you are only saying that you made a mistake and nothing about yourself as a person. For example, the teacher says, “What’s the matter with you? The assignment was supposed to be 13-D not 13-C.” You might respond with, “Oops, I made a mistake. I’ll do the correct assignment.”
3. ***If somebody continues to criticize you when it is not necessary, ask him what it is exactly that you are doing that bothers him.*** For example, somebody has criticized your new jeans as being too short for you. You have agreed that the jeans are too short but the person continues to make a big deal out of it. At this point you might say something like, “I’m not sure I understand. Just exactly what is about my short pants that’s troubling you so much?”

When you use any combination of the above three techniques for handling criticism assertively, then you are helping yourself get through an unpleasant situation without feeling guilty or bad. Knowing that you handle the situation as a responsible person will help you avoid shouting matches and name calling sessions. Dealing with criticism assertively gives the message to others that you expect with be treated with dignity, courtesy, and basic human respect.

# Lesson 7

## Negotiating



## **Lesson Plan #7—Negotiating**

**Objective:** Students will combine skills learned in assertiveness training and communication skills lessons to negotiate changes in some aspect of their day.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom, authority

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

### Skills for a Healthy Life:

B – A student should be able to demonstrate responsibility for the student’s well-being.

2) demonstrate a variety of communication skills that contribute to well-being;

C – A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others.

1) resolve conflicts responsibly;

2) communicate effectively within relationships;

D – A student should be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

6) use various methods of communication to promote community well-being.

### **Alternate Performance Standards:**

- Maintain positive interpersonal relationships;
- Contribute meaningfully in the community.

### **Activities:**

- Post on the board or some other prominent place in the room **Basic Rules of Negotiation** and underneath have written the following four items:

**1. Know what you want and why.**

**2. Plan what you will say.**

**3. Be truthful.**

**4. Don’t give up.**

Tell the students to imagine that they want to ask their parent(s) for an extended curfew. Apply the four posted rules to that situation. Have them imagine what they might say and what reason they would give for a later curfew. With a volunteer, model the exchange between student and parent using these skills.

- Distribute student handout and checklists. Review with students and clarify any confusing vocabulary and/or concepts. Brainstorm possible situations in which to use negotiating skills. Starters could include: with friends trying to decide what movie to watch; with parents to request a change in responsibilities; with a store clerk trying to exchange a faulty CD player; with a teacher trying to request an extension on an assignment.

Pair students up and ask a couple of volunteer teams to model their negotiations for the rest of the class.

- In teams of 2-3, select a scenario to role-play from the brainstorm list. The student who is not attempting to negotiate completes the checklist for the role player. Students then switch roles and repeat process.

**Materials:**

- 12 Steps to Successful Negotiation student handout;
- Assertive Skills Checklist student handout

## 12 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION

1. Face the other person.
2. Look in the eyes of the other person.
3. Use a good voice tone (not too loud or whiny).
4. Use a good facial expression.
5. Use good body posture (straight or relaxed).
6. Use good listening skills.
7. Ask for what you want.
8. State the reason why you want it.
9. Thank the other person if he or she agrees to the request.
10. Suggest a compromise if he or she does not agree. If they agree, say thank you.
11. Ask the other person for a solution if he or she does not agree with the compromise. Say thank you if you agree with their solution.
12. Suggest a different idea and keep on negotiation if you don't like the other person's solution. If you need more time to think about a solution ask for it. Also ask the other person when you can talk with him or her again.



## ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

**Directions:** Write an X in the box next to the skill you see your partner demonstrating.

Role Player's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Did the player:

1. Face the other person?	
2. Look the other person in the eyes?	
3. Use good voice tone?	
4. Use good facial expression?	
5. Use good body posture?	
6. Use good listening skills?	
7. Speak clearly and distinctly in whatever way he/she can?	
8. Treat the other person with courtesy and basic respect?	
9. Ask for what he or she wants?	
10. State reasons?	
11. Say thanks or ask for a different solution?	
12. Say thanks or ask for time to think it over?	

What did the player do really well?

What can the player do better next time?

# Lesson 8

## Rules, Rights, & Responsibilities





## Lesson Plan #8—Rules, Rights, & Responsibilities

**Objective:** Students will delineate the differences between rules, rights and responsibilities and identify specific applications in their own lives.

**Principle of self-determination supported:** Rights

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

Government and Citizenship:

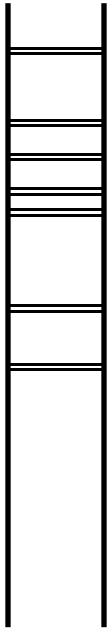
A – A student should know and understand how societies define authority, rights, and responsibilities through a governmental process.

2) understand the meaning of fundamental ideas, including equality, authority, power, freedom, justice, privacy, property, responsibility, and sovereignty;

**Activities:**

- **Introduce the concept of basic human rights:** Define “rights” simply as the rules that help make people equal. Discuss examples of basic rights and connect to the Bill of Rights.
- **Students Charter of Rights:** Have students draw up their own list of rules that they would like to see adopted to help ensure equality between people with and without disabilities. Each group presents its list noting overlaps. As the lists are blended into one charter, discuss how the students will work to see that the charter is enforced.
- **Connecting rights to responsibilities:** Discuss the fact that responsibilities go hand-in-hand with rights. Point out that if wish to have our own rights respected, we must respect the rights of other people and behave in a responsible way with them. Emphasize the importance of not wasting rights by using them carelessly or with adequate preparation or information. Examples can include the responsibility to register as a voter ahead of time and to know who the candidates are before exercising the right to vote; the responsibility to come to work everyday, to be on time, and to do the job as well as you can when exercising the right to work and make money, etc.
- **Responsibilities associated with student charter:** Identify the responsibilities that go with each right identified by the students in their charter.
- **Materials:**
  - Speak Out! Slides #37-41; '
  - Examples of other lists or declarations of human rights '  
(<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html> ,  
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/udhr.html> );
  - chart paper, markers; copies of student-generated charter for all students.

## LADDER



- L Look at your rights, what you want, what you need, and your feelings about the situation.
- A Arrange a convenient time and place to discuss your problem with the other person.
- D Define the problem situation as clearly as you can.
- D Describe how you feel about the situation using “I” messages (ex. “I feel upset when...”)
- E Express your request in a few clear, concise, but firm statements.
- R Reinforce the possibility of getting your request by highlighting the benefits to the other person or legal protections offered under disability rights laws.

### **Remember:**

- Ask questions about why your rights are being limited. Keep asking questions until you understand what is happening;
- Write down the answers you are given or get the answers on tape. Get as much information as you can and make sure it’s correct;
- Get a friend to help you if you want support. Some towns have services that can help you get a friend who knows about advocacy;
- Find out what all the choices are and pick the ones that are best for you;
- Decide what you think about the situation and what steps you need to take;
- Know who to talk to and who is in charge. Go to the person who makes the decisions;
- Know and use your rights.

# Lesson 9

## Tackling Infringements on Rights



## **Lesson Plan #9—Tackling Infringements on Rights**

**Objective:** Students will develop a set of strategies using assertive communication skills to address infringements on protected rights.

**Principle of self-determination supported:** Rights

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

Skills for A Healthy Life:

C – A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others.

- 1) resolve conflicts responsibly;
- 2) communicate effectively within relationships;
- 4) understand how respect for the rights of self and others contributes to relationships.

**Alternate Performance Standards**

- Maintain positive interpersonal relationships.

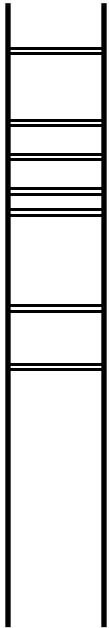
**Activities:**

- **Introduce the LADDER strategy for conflict resolution:** Present a hypothetical problem (works best if it's a situation from their school experience). Brainstorm possible solutions. Distribute handout and apply steps to the problem.
- **Role plays:** Using the **3 R's for Self-Determination** Student Practice Guide, apply LADDER strategy to activities on pgs. 6-8. When the option is available, videotape the role plays and ask students to evaluate their performances based on either pre-established criteria and class-established criteria.
- **Summarize:** As a group review the points to remember on the LADDER handout. Role play specific examples of each point.

**Materials:**

- LADDER handout;
- **3 R's for Self-Determination** Student Practice Guide role plays 1, 2;
- Speak Out slides #90-93; Self advocates from the community to assist with role play activities (contact local People First group);

## LADDER



- L Look at your rights, what you want, what you need, and your feelings about the situation.
- A Arrange a convenient time and place to discuss your problem with the other person.
- D Define the problem situation as clearly as you can.
- D Describe how you feel about the situation using “I” messages (ex. “I feel upset when...”)
- E Express your request in a few clear, concise, but firm statements.
- R Reinforce the possibility of getting your request by highlighting the benefits to the other person or legal protections offered under disability rights laws.

### **Remember:**

- Ask questions about why your rights are being limited. Keep asking questions until you understand what is happening;
- Write down the answers you are given or get the answers on tape. Get as much information as you can and make sure it’s correct;
- Get a friend to help you if you want support. Some towns have services that can help you get a friend who knows about advocacy;
- Find out what all the choices are and pick the ones that are best for you;
- Decide what you think about the situation and what steps you need to take;
- Know who to talk to and who is in charge. Go to the person who makes the decisions;
- Know and use your rights.

# Lesson 10

## Life After School



## **Lesson Plan #10—Life After School**

(**Note:** These activities can be incorporated into various other lessons or used as part of an overall life skills class.)

**Objective:** Student will develop strategies to with common situations related to independent or support living.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom, Rights, Authority, Responsibility, Creativity, Interdependence

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

Skills for a Healthy Life:

A - A student should be able to acquire a core knowledge related to well-being;

B - A student should be able to demonstrate responsibility for the student's well-being;

C - A student should understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others;

D - A student should be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

**Activities:**

Role play using The Student Guide around these topics:

- Choosing where you want to live
- Privacy
- Belongings
- Roommates
- Assistance, support, and interdependence
- Managing your money
- Medical care
- Friendships
- Family life
- Recreation
- Community participation

**Materials:**

- The 'Place of my Own' checklist, student handout '
- The Supported Living Home checklist, student handout '
- The 3 R's for Self Determination: A Student Practice Guide '

## The "Place of My Own" Checklist

If you are thinking about finding a place of your own, here is a way to look at a house or apartment where you might want to live. It will help you decide what is good about the place and what could be better. The best way to use this checklist is:

- Make sure you get a chance to see the house or apartment and the immediate neighborhood;
- If you need help with the checklist ask a friend, relative, care coordinator, or someone else you feel comfortable with;
- You may be looking at several different places—use this checklist to decide which house or apartment is best for you.

The place is close to stores, banks, places to eat and other places I will need to go.

The place is clean inside and outside.

The place is in an area of my choice.

The place is near a bus route.

The neighborhood feels safe and I'm comfortable when I leave the house or apartment.

The rooms in the house or apartment are easy to get around in and you can move around in a wheelchair.



The place is in good repair.

I can afford the deposit that I need to give the landlord.

I have read over the rental agreement or had someone help me understand it.

The stove is gas or electric and works well.

There is a refrigerator that works well.

There is a dishwasher that works well.

The heat is gas or electric and works well.

The neighbors are friendly and supportive.

If I am living with roommates, we have talked about our own "house rules."

I have my own bedroom or the place has enough privacy for me.

The place has ramps and enough space to get through with a wheelchair.

My own questions:

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## The Supported Living Home Checklist

If you are thinking about living in an assisted living home, here is a way to look at a house where you might want to live. It will help you decide what is good about the place and what could be better. The best way to use this checklist is:

- Make sure you get a chance to visit the house and look around;
- Ask someone who lives or works at the house if they can help you with the checklist if you think you might want help;
- As you look at each statement ask yourself, "Is this a house where I want to live?" Check either "yes" or "no."
- Think about all these things before you decide if you want to live in the house or not. If you want help with the decision, review your answers with a friend, relative, care coordinator, or someone else you trust.

YES  NO The house is near other houses where people live.

YES  NO There are things to do at the house for fun and exercise.

YES  NO The house is close to stores, banks, places to eat and so on.

YES  NO The house is clean inside and outside.

YES  NO There is room to move around in the house without bumping into other people.

YES  NO There is a way to get heat into each bedroom.

YES  NO The bedroom is big enough to have a place to keep things, like a closet and a dresser.

- YES  NO The beds are nice to sleep on and are big enough for each person.
- YES  NO The house looks like a place for adults.
- YES  NO The bathrooms work well and are easy to get to.
- YES  NO You can have friends and family come to the house and you can talk to them privately.
- YES  NO People can do things on their own like cook and wash clothes.
- YES  NO People go the doctor and the dentist when they need to go.
- YES  NO The food tastes good and is good for you.
- YES  NO People get to choose things like what clothes to wear and when to go to bed.
- YES  NO People do things in the community, like visit friends, go shopping, or to parties.
- YES  NO Everyone helps make up the house rules.
- YES  NO People who live in the house want to live there.
- YES  NO You can get your own mail and use the telephone.
- YES  NO If you don't want to let someone in your room, you don't have to.
- YES  NO There are staff around when you need help.

YES  NO

The staff know how to help when you need it.

YES  NO

The staff can understand what you say and you can understand what they say.

YES  NO

Staff has a van or car to take you places, like to the store or to the doctor.

YES  NO

Staff talk to you in a nice way and use your first name.

YES  NO

Staff are nice to your family and friends when they visit you.

YES  NO

Everyone has a written plan of goals and activities.

YES  NO

There is time each day to help you work on your written plan.

YES  NO

People know their rights and staff can explain them.

YES  NO

If staff help you with your money, they keep records of how it is spent and explain it to you.

My own questions:

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# Lesson 11

## Understanding the Law



## Lesson Plan #11—Understanding Your Rights Under the Law

(**Note:** You may want to present this lesson prior to “What is Special Ed?” The vocabulary material for lesson #12 may also be incorporated here.)

**Objective:** Student will demonstrate an understanding of equal opportunity provisions under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom, Rights, Responsibility

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

Government Citizenship:

A – A student should know and understand how societies define authority, rights, and responsibilities through a governmental process.

- 1) understand the necessity and purpose of government;
- 2) understand the meaning of fundamental ideas, including equality, authority, power, freedom, justice, privacy, property, responsibility, and sovereignty.

**Activities:**

- **Core information:** Present the following dilemma. The student and a friend want to have lunch at a new restaurant. The friend uses a wheelchair, but the restaurant has three stairs out front leading up to the front door. Brainstorm responses. Distribute and review the **Americans with Disabilities Act Fact Sheet**. Develop functional definitions for any terms unfamiliar to students.
- **Time Line:** Using electronic, print, and multimedia resources, construct a timeline that tracks the development of rights for people with disabilities. This may be done in conjunction with a social studies class in the context of the civil rights movement as a whole.
- **IDEA:** Explain the main components of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, using support material from Plan #12, if desired. Connect IDEA, ADA, and other disability rights legislation to the concept of ensuring equal access and rights for all citizens.
- **Role plays:** Using activities from the Student’s Practice Guide, act out possible responses to situations in which protected rights are violated.
- **Extension:** Using the article **What You Should Know About Disability Laws: An Interview with David Capozzi**, apply content reading and/or study skills strategies. Students will identify key points to remember and create their own personal disability law fact sheet.

**Materials:**

- Americans with Disabilities Act Fact Sheet;
- 3 R’s for Self-Determination: Student practice guide pgs. 13, 15-16, 41;

- Article: What You Should Know About Disability Laws: An Interview with David Capozzi



## **THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT FACT SHEET**

*Editor's Note:* The following information on the Americans with Disabilities Act was provided to LDA by the National Organization on Disability, Washington, DC and is reprinted here with their very kind permission. Although not all of the information given here may apply to all individuals with learning disabilities, it is important for readers to understand the broad parameters of the Act. Therefore the entire Fact Sheet is reproduced here.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) furthers the goal of full participation of people with disabilities by giving civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities that are provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin and relation. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications. President Bush signed the ADA into law on July 26, 1990. Highlights of the Act as set forth by the US Department of Justice are:

### **Employment**

- Employers may not discriminate against an individual with a disability in hiring or promotion if the person is otherwise qualified for the job.
- Employers can ask about one's ability to perform a job but cannot inquire if someone has a disability or subject a person to tests that tend to screen out people with disabilities.
- Employers will need to provide *reasonable accommodations* to individuals with disabilities. This includes such steps as job restructuring and modification of equipment.
- Employers do not need to provide accommodations that impose *undue hardship* on business operations.
- Employers may reject applicants or fire employees who pose a direct threat to the health and safety of other individuals in the workplace.
- Applicants and employees who are current users of drugs have no rights to claim discrimination on the basis of their illegal drug use under the ADA. Drug testing is not prohibited by the ADA.
- Employers may not discriminate against a qualified applicant or employee because of the known disability of an individual with whom the applicant or employee is known to have a relationship or association.
- Religious organizations may give preference in employment to their own members and may require applicants and employees to conform to their religious tenets.
- ADA provides the remedies available under Title VII of The Civil Rights Act of 1964. They include back pay and court orders to stop discrimination.
- Complaints may be filed with the US Equal Employment Opportunity commission.

## **Who needs to comply?**

- Employers with 25 or more employees must comply effective July 26, 1992.
- Employers with 15-24 employees must comply effective July 26, 1994.
- Regulations are due from the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission by July 26, 1991.

## **Transportation**

### **Public Bus Systems**

- New buses ordered on or after August 26, 1990 must be accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Transit authorities must provide comparable paratransit or other special transportation services to individuals with disabilities who cannot use fixed-route bus services unless an undue burden would result.
- New bus stations must be accessible. Alterations to existing stations must be accessible. When alterations to primary function areas are made, an accessible path of travel to the altered area (and the bathrooms, telephones and drinking fountains serving that area) must be provided to the extent that the added accessibility costs are not disproportionate to the overall cost of the alterations.
- Individuals may file complaints with The US Department of Transportation or bring private lawsuits.
- ADA provides the remedies available under Section 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **Public Rail Systems**

- New rail vehicles ordered on or after August 26, 1990 must be accessible.
- Existing rail systems must have one accessible car per train by July 26, 1995.
- New rail stations must be accessible. As with new bus stations, alterations to existing rail stations must be made in an accessible manner.
- Existing *key stations* in rapid rail, commuter rail and light rail systems must be made accessible by July 26, 1992 unless an extension of up to 20 years is granted (30 years, in some cases, for rapid and light rail).
- Existing intercity rail stations (Amtrak) must be accessible by July 26, 2010.
- Individuals may file complaints with the US Department of Transportation or bring private lawsuits.

### **Privately Operated Bus and Van Companies:**

- New over-the-road buses ordered on or after July 26, 1996 (July 26, 1997 for small companies) must be accessible. After completion of a study the President may extend the deadline by one year, if appropriate.
- Other new vehicles, such as vans, must be accessible, unless the transportation company provides service to individuals with disabilities that is equivalent to that operated for the general public.
- Individuals may file complaints with the US Attorney General or bring private lawsuits under the public accommodations procedures.

The ADA requirements for privately operated bus and van companies becomes effective on:

- January 26, 1992 generally.
- January 26, 1996 (January 26, 1997 for small companies) for purchase of new over-the-road buses.
- August 26, 1990 for purchase or lease of certain new vehicles (other than over-the-road buses).
- Regulations are due from the US Department of Transportation by July 26, 1991.

### **Public Accommodations**

- Public accommodations such as restaurants, hotels, theaters, doctors offices, pharmacies, retail stores, museums, libraries, parks, private schools, and day care centers may not discriminate, on the basis of disability, effective January 26, 1992. Private clubs and religious organizations are exempt.
- Reasonable changes in policies, practices, and procedure must be made to avoid discrimination.
- Auxiliary aids and services must be provided to individuals with vision or hearing impairments or other individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would result.
- Physical barriers in existing facilities must be removed if removal is readily achievable (i.e., easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense). If not, alternative methods of providing the services must be offered, if those methods are readily achievable.
- All new construction in public accommodations, as well as in *commercial facilities* such as office buildings, must be accessible. Elevators are generally not required in buildings under three stories or with fewer than 3,000 square feet per floor, unless the building is a shopping center, mall, or professional office of a health care provider.
- Alterations must be accessible. When alterations to primary function areas are made, an accessible path of travel to the altered area (and the bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains that serve that area) must be provided to the extent that the added accessibility costs are not disproportionate to the overall cost of the alterations.
- Entities such as hotels that also offer transportation generally must provide equivalent transportation service to individuals with disabilities. New fixed-route vehicles ordered on or after August 26, 1990 and capable of carrying more than 126 passengers, must be accessible.
- Public accommodations may not discriminate against an individual or entity because of the known disability of an individual with whom the individual or entity is known to have a relationship or association.
- Individuals may bring private lawsuits to obtain court orders to stop discrimination. But money damages cannot be awarded.
- Individuals can also file complaints with the US Attorney General who must file lawsuits to stop discrimination and obtain money damages and penalties.

- Regulations are due from the US Department of Justice on July 26, 1991 based on standards issued by the US Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

### **State and Government Operations**

- State and local governments may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities. All government facilities, services, and communications must be accessible consistent with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Individuals may file complaints with federal agencies to be designated by the US Attorney General or bring private lawsuits.
- Regulations are due from the US Department of Justice on July 26, 1991.

### **Telecommunications**

- Companies offering telephone service to the general public must offer telephone relay services to individuals who use telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDDs) or similar devices.
- Individuals may file complaints with the Federal Communications Commission.
- Regulations are due from the Federal Communication Commission on July 26, 1991.

All of the above information is available from the US Department of Justice in the following accessible formats: Braille, large print, audiotape, and electronic file on computer disk and electronic bulletin board. The electronic bulletin board phone number is (202) 514-6193.

The information on this Fact Sheet is taken from two US Department of Justice documents: **ADA Requirements Fact Sheet** and **ADA Statutory Deadlines**. These documents are available at no cost from:

US Department of Justice  
 Civil Rights Division  
 Coordination and Review Section  
 P.O. Box 66118  
 Washington, DC 20035-6118  
 Phone: 11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. Eastern Time  
 (202) 514-0301 (voice)  
 (202) 514-0381 (TDD)  
 (202) 514-0383 (TDD)

For additional information and answers to questions, contact the US Department of Justice at the address and telephone numbers above. Copies of the full 90-page Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 may be obtained, at no cost, from:

US Senate Subcommittee on Disability Policy  
 113 Senate Hart Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20510  
 Phone:(202) 224-6265 (voice)  
 (202) 224-3457 (TDD)

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DISABILITY LAWS** **An Interview with David Capozzi\***

Ordinarily, you probably think of laws as rules telling you what you *can't* do: You can't drive through a red light, you can't help yourself to cookies in a grocery store without paying for them, you can't fudge your income on your federal tax return. But for young people with disabilities, some of the most important laws specify what you *can* do. In recent years, the federal government has passed a number of laws specifically aimed at benefiting people with disabilities. According to Mr. Capozzi, some of the most important are the IDEA, the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Air Carrier Access Act.

### **The IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**

This is a new name for an old law: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142). If you have ever received physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language therapy, or any other special education service through your school, you have probably at least heard of this law. You may not be aware, however, of exactly what the IDEA means to you. Basically, it means that students with disabilities are entitled to receive a "free, appropriate education" in the "least restrictive environment". Furthermore, an "Individualized Education Program" (IEP) must be designed to meet each student's unique learning needs. Here's what these important provisions mean:

#### **Free, Appropriate Education**

The "free" in this expression means exactly what it sounds like. Students with disabilities are entitled to receive a public school education at no cost to themselves or their parents. If there is no public school available that can serve their needs, then the public school system must pay for them to attend a private school. The "appropriate" in this expression is a little harder to understand. Two common misunderstandings are: 1) that it means that students with disabilities are entitled to receive the best possible education; or 2) that students with disabilities should receive an education that is as good as students without disabilities receive. Unfortunately, neither of these things is true. What "appropriate" really means is that you must receive an education that is reasonable certain to give you some benefit. Fortunately, students and their parents have some say in determining what kind of education is appropriate and will provide them some benefit. This is where the concepts of least restrictive environment and the individualized education program came in. (See below.)

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\*David M. Capozzi is the Director of the Office of Technical and Information Services for the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board. He has testified in support of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) before the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation and was a member of the ADA "legal team" for the disability community that helped craft the legislative history and the final bill. As a member of a Federal Advisory Committee, he also helped negotiate regulations to implement the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986.

## **Least Restrictive Environment**

This provision of the law requires that students with disabilities be mainstreamed as much as possible with non-disabled students. This means that if a student with a physical disability is capable of mastering the subjects taught in a regular classroom, he must be permitted to take his classes there. It also means that the school may have to make alterations to a classroom or provide special services to enable students with disabilities to be mainstreamed. For example, if a student with spina bifida wants to play trumpet in the band, but the band room is inaccessible to him because of the way the risers are placed, the school might have to build ramps. Or if someone who uses sign language to communicate is capable of learning calculus, but the only calculus teacher in the school can't understand sign language, the school would be required to find some way to allow the student to participate in class. The bottom line is that students with physical disabilities who have varying intellectual abilities cannot all be warehoused in the same classroom simply because other parts of the school building would require modification to be accessible.

## **Individualized Education Program**

You are probably familiar with the basic elements of an IEP. To review, they include:

1. a description of your present level of achievement;
2. short-term and long-term goals of your educational program;
3. the specific educational services you will receive;
4. the date services will start and how long they will last;
5. the methods (such as tests) that will be used to determine whether you are meeting your goals;
6. the extent to which you will be mainstreamed.

After you reach sixteen, your IEP must also include a plan for helping you make the transition to work or college after graduation. This is a fairly new requirement, so you may find yourself asking for specific kinds of transition help that your school does not yet routinely provide. Types of transition services your school may be required to provide, if appropriate, include vocational training, training in independent living skills, and assistance in preparing for and making the transition to college. You, your parents, and school personnel should *jointly* decide what transition services you should receive, based on what you want to do after high school.

This brings up an important point: Transition planning is not the only way you can be involved in designing your IEP. Provided your parents consent you can take part in every annual meeting held to discuss your education program. You can tell the school staff *in person* about any problems you are having in school and also suggest strategies for solving those problems. Sometimes the IEP meeting may appear to be an adversarial process, because schools are cutting back on funding. But if you can give a good argument about why you *need* a particular service for example, a reader, a note taker, occupational therapy, or additional speech-language therapy – you just might get it.

What if you or your parents request a particular service, but you are turned down? If you can show that this means you are not receiving an appropriate education, you can fight the decision. The easiest way to resolve a dispute like this is for you and your parents to request a meeting with the IEP team, then try to work out a compromise. If the school staff won't budge you can request a due process hearing. During a due process hearing, both you and the school are given the chance to present your side of the story before an impartial hearing officer. You can bring witnesses (doctors, teachers, therapists), show the hearing officer medical records, hire a lawyer to argue your case, or otherwise try to convince the hearing officer that you need the educational program you are requesting. After both you and the school have presented your side, the hearing officer will decide which side has the stronger case. To request a due process hearing, one of your parents can send a letter to your school district's Special Education Director, briefly explaining the nature of the dispute.

### **The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)**

After the IDEA, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is probably the single most important piece of disability legislation ever passed. Its purpose is to knock down virtually all remaining barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in their communities. There are provisions aimed at eliminating discrimination in employment, "public accommodations," telecommunications, and public transportation. Briefly, this is what these provisions cover:

#### **Employment**

As of July 26, 1992, companies with 25 or more employees are prohibited from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities. As of July 26, 1994, companies with 15 or more employees may not discriminate. This means that if you are qualified to do a particular job, an employer cannot refuse to hire you, train you, or give you a promotion simply because you have a disability. Furthermore, employers are required to make "reasonable accommodation" to permit you to do the job properly, unless it would cause them "undue hardship." "Reasonable accommodation" means taking steps to remove barriers that make it difficult or impossible for you to do the job. Reasonable accommodation might include making the workplace more accessible to you, modifying office equipment so you can use it, changing some job responsibilities that require more physical strength or agility than you have, or providing an interpreter.

#### **Public Accommodations**

This provision of the ADA prohibits discrimination by *any* business or facility that is open to the general public. Restaurants, hotels, theaters, parks, grocery stores, health clubs, hospitals, shopping centers, museums, bowling alleys – almost any business you can think of – must be open to individuals with disabilities under the same terms as they are open to individuals without disabilities. For example, a health club could not bar you from joining just because its locker room is not wheelchair accessible. (Instead, it might have to *make* the locker room accessible.) Or a restaurant could not refuse to let you use its dance floor because they think your wheelchair might get in the way of other dancers. Unless it would impose an unreasonable cost, every business that is open to

the public must allow people with disabilities to use their facilities on an equal footing with others.

### **Telecommunications**

By July 26, 1993, all telecommunications companies must make their services accessible to individuals with speech or hearing impairments. What this boils down to is that people who use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) must be able to communicate via telephone with people who do not have a TDD. The telecommunications companies will accomplish this via relay services. In addition, people with disabilities will not be charged any more to use telecommunications systems than people without disabilities.

### **Public Transportation**

This provision of the ADA is designed to ensure that all types of public transportation will be accessible to people with disabilities. As of August 26, 1990, public bus and rail systems cannot buy new vehicles unless they are accessible. (Unfortunately, public school buses can still segregate students with disabilities from able-bodied students. We expect people with disabilities to enter mainstream society as adults, yet we still separate them on school buses as children and young adults. It doesn't make much sense.)

### **Making the ADA Work for You**

The ADA is still relatively new, so it is difficult to tell how successful this law will be in creating a barrier-free society. In the meantime, what's the best way to use the ADA when you run up against a barrier? Mr. Capozzi suggests that you first make the manager or other person in charge aware of your problem in a nonthreatening way. For example, if there are steps leading into a restaurant where a ramp could easily be installed, politely tell the manager that this is a problem for people in wheelchairs. Second, tell him or her about the ADA. Explain that it is good business practice to make his restaurant accessible, because you and your family would like to spend your money here. And by not having a ramp, his business is excluding 43 million people with disabilities who could potentially be customers. Tell the manager that it is the right thing to do. You could also let him know that there are tax incentives for businesses that make themselves more accessible. As of 1992, a business that removes barriers to comply with the ADA can take a tax deduction of up to \$15,000 a year.

A number of agencies in the federal government can answer specific questions about the provisions of the ADA.

### **The Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Before the ADA was passed, discrimination against individuals with disabilities was only outlawed in certain instances. For example, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibited discrimination by federally funded programs only. This law is still in effect. It requires that any program or activity that receives federal funds make itself accessible so that people with disabilities can participate. Federally funded agencies



include not only federal agencies, but also many job-training programs, schools and universities, transportation systems, recreation programs, and housing programs.

This law will become increasingly important to you as you graduate from high school and move on to college. For example, if a college class you are scheduled to take is on the second floor, but there is no elevator, the school must make the classroom accessible either by moving the class downstairs or by installing some type of lift.

### **Air Carrier Access Act of 1986**

This Act states in general that airlines may not discriminate against people with disabilities. In 1990, more specific regulations were created to give airlines and people with disabilities guidance. Now airlines cannot require a passenger with a disability to travel with an attendant. In addition, passengers with folding wheelchairs must be permitted to store them on board in the coat closet. If you do encounter a problem while traveling by plane, ask for the complaint resolution official with the airline for help resolving the problem. If you are still dissatisfied, you can file a formal complaint with the Department of Transportation. The address for Air Carrier Access Act complaints is: Consumer Affairs Department, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 7<sup>th</sup> St., S.W., Washington, DC 20590.

## **Questions and Answers About the ADA**

**Q. Is an employer required to provide reasonable accommodation when I apply for a job?**

**A.** Yes. Applicants, as well as employees, are entitled to reasonable accommodation. For example, an employer may be required to provide a sign language interpreter during a job interview for an applicant who is deaf or hearing impaired, unless to do so would impose an undue hardship.

**Q. Should I tell my employer that I have a disability?**

**A.** If you think you will need a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions, you should inform the employer that an accommodation will be needed. Employers are required to provide reasonable accommodation only for the physical or mental limitations of a qualified individual with a disability of which they are aware. Generally, it is the responsibility of the employee to inform the employer that accommodation is needed.

**Q. Do I have to pay for a needed reasonable accommodation?**

**A.** No. The ADA requires that the employer provide the accommodation unless to do so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business. If the cost of providing the needed accommodation would be an undue hardship, the employee must be given the choice of providing the

accommodation or paying for the portion of the accommodation that causes the undue hardship.

**Q. Can an employer lower my salary or pay me less than other employees doing the same job because I need a reasonable accommodation?**

A. No. An employer cannot make up the cost of providing a reasonable accommodation by lowering your salary or paying you less than other employees in similar positions.

**Q. Does an employer have to make non-work areas used by employees, such as cafeterias, lounges, or employer-provided transportation accessible to people with disabilities?**

A. Yes. The requirement to provide reasonable accommodation covers all services, programs, and non-work facilities provided by the employer. If making an existing facility accessible would be an undue hardship, the employer must provide a comparable facility that will enable a person with a disability to enjoy benefits and privileges of employment similar to those enjoyed by other employees, unless to do so would be an undue hardship.

**Q. If an employer has several qualified applicants for a job, is the employer required to select a qualified applicant with a disability over other applicants without a disability?**

A. No. The ADA does not require that an employer hire an applicant with a disability over other applicants because the person has a disability. The ADA only prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. It makes it unlawful to refuse to hire a qualified applicant with a disability because he is disabled or because a reasonable accommodation is required to make it possible for this person to perform essential job functions.

**Q. Can an employer refuse to hire me because he believes that it would be unsafe, because of my disability, for me to work with certain machinery required to perform the essential functions of the job.**

A. The ADA permits an employer to refuse to hire an individual if she poses a direct threat to the health or safety of herself or others. A direct threat means a significant risk of substantial harm. The determination that there is a direct threat must be based on objective, factual evidence regarding an individual's present ability to perform essential functions of a job. An employer cannot refuse to hire you because of a slightly increased risk or because of fears that there might be a significant risk sometime in the future. The employer must also consider whether a risk can be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level with a reasonable accommodation.

**Q. Can an employer offer a health insurance that excludes coverage for pre-existing conditions?**

A. Yes. The ADA does not affect pre-existing condition clauses contained in health insurance policies even though such clauses may adversely affect employees with disabilities more than other employees.

**Q. If the health insurance offered by my employer does not cover all of the medical expenses related to my disability, does the company have to obtain additional coverage for me?**

A. No. The ADA only requires that an employer provide employees with disabilities equal access to whatever health insurance coverage is offered to other employees.

**Q. I think I was discriminated against because my wife is disabled. Can I file a charge with the EEOC?**

A. Yes. The ADA makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual, whether disabled or not, because of a relationship or association with an individual with a known disability.

**Q. Are people with AIDS covered by the ADA?**

A. Yes. The legislative history indicates that Congress intended the ADA to protect persons with AIDS and HIV disease from discrimination.



# Lesson 12

## What is Special Education



## Lesson Plan #12—What Is Special Ed.?

(Note: Consider presenting this material after Lesson #11, Understanding Your Rights)

**Objective:** Student will develop an understanding of rights, responsibilities, and process of special education in public schools in order to participate more effectively in IEP and transition plan development.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom, Rights, Authority, Responsibility, Creativity, Interdependence

### Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:

#### English/Language Arts:

B – A student should be a competent and thoughtful reader, listener, and viewer of literature, technical materials, and a variety of other information.

- 1) comprehend meaning from written text and oral and visual information by applying a variety of reading, listening, and viewing strategies; these strategies include phonic, context, and vocabulary cues in reading, critical view, and active listening;

D – A student should be able to think logically and reflectively in order to present and explain positions based on relevant and reliable information.

- 1) develop a position by
  - a. reflecting on personal experience, prior knowledge, and new information;
  - b. formulating and refining questions;
  - c. identifying a variety of pertinent sources of information;
  - d. analyzing and synthesizing information;
  - e. and determining an author's purposes;

#### Skills for a Healthy Life:

B – A student should be able to acquire a core knowledge related to well-being.

- 4) develop an awareness of how personal life roles are affected by and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and cultures;

D – A student should be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

- 4) identify and evaluate the roles and influences of public and private organizations that contribute to the well-being of communities.

### Alternate Performance Standards

#### English/Language Arts:

- Relate and apply what is viewed or read to practical purposes;
- Comprehend meaning from oral language and other forms of communication.

#### Skills For A Healthy Life:

- Make choices and advocate for self and others;

- Contribute meaningfully at home and in the classroom.

### Activities:

- **Basic concepts, vocabulary, process:** Remind students of what was learned about the IDEA and list main concepts of the Act on the board. Brainstorm lists of students' impressions of IEP meetings. Using the vocabulary exercise, develop functional definitions in student's words for terms specific to the special education process. Using the **ABC's of IEP's** handout, help students to understand the basic elements of the IEP and the importance of their role in its development.
- Use students' impressions of past IEP meetings as a springboard to address the issue of self-determination as it relates to the planning process. Also connect it to other planning activities students may encounter after school. Emphasize the importance of the student's role in participating in planning, as well as the roles of other participants.
- **Person-centered planning:** Invite a facilitator team from the Alaska Person-Centered Planning Facilitators Network to facilitate a plan for one or more students. Connect the plan to elements in the IEP or transition plan.
- **Participation in plan development:** (mock meetings, including both pre- and post meeting discussions with student). Prior to mock meetings, have students determine the criteria on which they want to evaluate one another. Draft agendas and student scripts for mock meetings. Provide opportunities for students to practice their scripts/roles prior to videotaping a mock meeting or participating in an actual meeting. Refer to **Student-Led IEP's** for specifics on student involvement in facilitating an IEP meeting.
- **Post meeting issues:** Work with student(s) to assess his/her satisfaction with the process, clarify issues that remain unclear, and complete the **Planning Meeting Checklist** to be included in portfolio.

### Materials:

- Information from disability laws fact sheets; '
- Sample of district's IEP form; '
- Information from self-knowledge activities completed earlier; '
- PCP facilitator team; large sheet of butcher paper; markers; student volunteer(s); '
- *It's My Life* video; '
- "Fostering Self-Determination" booklet; '
- Video modeling material; '
- 3 R's for Self-Determination Student practice guide pgs. 39-41; '
- Planning Meeting Checklist; Vocabulary Exercise; '
- ABC's of IEP's student handout; '
- Student-Led IEPs: A Guide for Student Involvement. '

## The Planning Meeting Checklist

You are working on becoming more involved in you IEP or transition planning meetings. Use this checklist when the meeting is over to tell how well the meeting went.

- YES  NO Did you have a chance to work with your special education teacher before the meeting about what you wanted included in your plan?
- YES  NO Did you make a list of things you wanted to include in the plan?
- YES  NO Were all of the people that you wanted at the meeting?
- YES  NO Did everyone look at the things you put on your list?
- YES  NO Did you, your parent(s), friends, regular classroom teacher, and other support people in your life help decide what was written on the plan?
- YES  NO Did you get information about the kinds of services you might want or need?
- YES  NO Did you get a chance to talk about your interests, likes, dislikes, what you do well, where you want help, and what you might want for the future?
- YES  NO Did you get to ask questions?
- YES  NO Did all of your questions get answered?



What were the best things about the meeting?

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What could have been better about the meeting?

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If there are a lot of "no" answers to these questions then you should ask to have another planning meeting.

## Vocabulary Exercise

**Directions:** Below are some terms frequently used when we talk about special education. Work with your teacher and/or team members to develop “real world” meanings instead of textbook definitions. Be prepared to share your definition with the rest of the class.

**Accommodation**—changes made in instruction, presentation, format, response, setting, timing, or scheduling that does not significantly change the content of the curriculum.

**Alternate assessment**—an accountability measure that uses another means of assessing student’s mastery of basic components of Alaska’s Content Standards.

**Performance standard**—statements within the Content Standards that describe specific student behavior when a standard has been mastered.

**Least restrictive environment**—To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are non-disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of disability is such that education in the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

**Free and appropriate public education**—special education and related services that:

- a) Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction (public schools) '
- b) Meet the standards of the state education agency; '
- c) Includes preschool, elementary school, and secondary school; '
- d) Are guided by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) '

**IEP**—an Individual Educational Plan directs the educational program of students in special education. The IEP must specify:

- Description of present level of achievement;
- Short term and long term goals of the educational program;
- Specific educational services that will be provided;
- Dates and duration of those services;
- Assessment measures;
- The extent to which the student will be mainstreamed.

**IDEA**—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, ensures that the rights of all children with disabilities and their parents are protected. The Act ensures that eligible children receive a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living.

**ADA**—Americans with Disabilities Act, ensures the rights of people with disabilities to equal access and opportunities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications.

**Supports**—people and/or structures that assist a person with disabilities accomplish tasks and work toward goals. Supports may be paid staff or unpaid (natural) friends, family.

**Modification**—changes that alter the curriculum in substantial ways.

**Placement**—Whether or not a student will be included in a regular classroom setting. Placement can fall along a continuum ranging from total restriction to a special education resource classroom to total inclusion in a regular classroom. The law requires that the student be placed in the least restrictive environment.

**Related services**—transportation, developmental corrective, and other supportive services that assist a child to benefit from special education.

## ABC's of IEP's

Your individual educational plan (IEP) is one of the most important documents in your school career. Ideally, you either have had or will be having a say in what goes into this plan. Your participation in the plan development is like planning a trip across country. You need to know where you're starting from, where you're going, the stops along the way, how you're going to get there, and how you'll know you've arrived. Here's how that looks in an IEP:

**Description of present level of achievement:** this is the "know where you're starting from" part. This part of your IEP will describe your strengths and abilities, your disability, and talks about how you're doing in school.

**Long term goals of your educational program:** this is the "know where you're going" part or the destination of our. It will describe what the final outcome of your time in school.

**Short term goals of your educational program:** Here's the "stops along the way" portion. If this were a trip, there'd be places we'd have to plan to stop for gas, rest, food, etc. We know when we stop that we're still heading down the road, but these stops along the way break the big trip into manageable stretches.

**Specific educational services you will receive:** This is the "how" part of our trip. Are we getting to our destination on a bus? In a car? Are we rolling across country in a wheelchair? To reach your educational goals, the school must say how you're going to get there. Will you get extra help? Will school work be modified? Will you be getting support from an occupational or physical therapist? All these things need to be spelled out in your IEP.

**Dates of service and how long will the services last:** Is our trip going to be a speedy one or are we stretching this out for a long time? Do you need your educational services all year, or are there certain ones that you'll need for a short time?

**The methods that will be used to determine whether or not you're reaching your goals:** How will you know when you've arrived at your destination? Do you find a road sign or ask someone? For your educational program, we need to have a way to figure out if you're getting further toward your goals. Methods might include tests, school performance, attendance, among other things.

**The extent to which you'll be included in the regular classroom:** For the trip, are you using the huge super freeway or will you be taking the back country roads? In school, the law says that you need to be in the "least restrictive environment" for your educational program. That means that schools can't keep you in a separate class because of a disability if you can still master the material taught in a regular classroom.

This planning takes time, thought, and your input is vital. So, start thinking, where do you want to go today?

# Lesson 13

## Voting



## Lesson Plan #13—Voting

**Objective:** Student will describe the importance of exercising the right to vote and the responsibility to be informed about making voting decisions.

**Principle(s) of self-determination support:** Freedom, Rights, Responsibility

**Alaska Content Standard(s) supported:**

Government Citizenship:

E – A student should have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively as an informed and responsible citizen.

- 1) know the important characteristics of citizenship;
- 2) recognize that it is important to citizens to fulfill their public responsibilities;
- 3) exercise political participation by discussing public issues, building consensus, becoming involved in political parties and political campaigns, and voting.

**Alternate Assessment Performance Standards:**

English/Language Arts:

- Relate and apply what is viewed or read to practical purposes;
- Comprehend meaning from oral language and other forms of communication.

Skills For A Healthy Life:

- Make choices and advocate for self and others;
- Contribute meaningfully at home and in the classroom.

**Activities:**

- **Core information:** Invite a candidate or voter registrar to make a presentation about the importance of participating in elections. For those eligible, register to vote as part of a class activity. If your district offers the “Voting In The Schools” program, incorporate that curriculum into activities.
- **Role plays:** Using activities from the Student’s Practice Guide, act out situations related to voting. If available, visit a polling place to become familiar with the process for voting used in your community.
- **Extension:** If this lesson occurs near a local or nation election (strongly recommended), have students gather information about candidates and issues. Encourage students to attend presentations by candidates or develop questions that they would like answers to. Assist students with accessing information from both formal (Project Vote Smart, Alaska Election Pamphlet) and informal (family, teachers, friends) sources.

**Materials:**

- Alaska Voter Registration form;
- 3 R's of Self-Determination: Student practice guide pg. 42; Self-advocates to support role play activities; '
- *Voting In The Schools* curriculum; '
- Project Vote Smart Ambassador presentation, Voters Self-Defense ' Manual, US Government Owners Manual (available online at <http://www.votesmart.org>);
- Alaska Election Pamphlet