

**The Self-Determination Procedural Safeguard Project  
Survey of Alaska's Special Education Teachers  
2008 Report**

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## The Self-Determination Procedural Safeguard Project

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## Executive Summary

### 2008 Evaluation Report of the Self-Determination Procedural Safeguard Project

In 2004, the Center for Human Development's Self-Determination Procedural Safeguard Project introduced *Teaching Self-Determination in Alaska Schools: A Toolkit for Teachers*, funded by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. The Toolkit is a collection of resources that provides a basic framework to build self-determination activities into both traditional and adapted curricula, instructional resources that are aligned with educational standards adopted by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, as well as tools to assess the development of self-determination in students. A unique feature is student educational material in the form of comics, written and illustrated by people with disabilities.

The project has provided the Toolkit, training, and technical assistance on using self-determination strategies in educational settings for approximately 164 special education teachers impacting approximately 2,166 special education students through the beginning of 2008. During the month of February 2008, a survey was sent to over 1,000 State of Alaska special education teachers to: 1) identify the elements of self-determination being taught; 2) identify the reasons self-determination skills were not being taught; 3) assess the influence of the Alaska Toolkit on self-determination instruction; and 4) obtain recommendations for improving the Toolkit and/or implementation of the project.

Nearly half of potential respondents answered the survey. The majority of respondents taught at the elementary level and most worked with students with specific learning disabilities in addition to other disabilities. They most frequently used the following elements of self-determination with their students:

- Teaching about and providing opportunities for choice-making
- Teaching self-management and self-regulation skills
- Teaching self-awareness and self-knowledge
- Teaching about and providing opportunities for problem-solving

The elements that teachers reported using least frequently included implementing person-centered planning, involving students in educational planning meetings, and goal setting and attainment. They reported three primary barriers to teaching less frequently used elements of self-determination skills:

- There are other areas in which students need instruction more urgently,
- Insufficient time to provide instruction in these areas, and
- Students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.).

When combining the results of the 2007 survey and this survey, statistically significant differences were found between those teachers who had experience with the Toolkit and those who had not in the areas of involving students in educational planning meetings, teaching problem solving, and teaching self-advocacy and leadership skills. Also, secondary teachers who had experience with the Toolkit were more likely to implement person-centered planning than those who had no experience with the Toolkit. Finally, there were several qualitative comments about the positive impacts the Toolkit has had in teachers' classrooms.

Based on the results of this survey, the project will:

- Continue focusing training and technical assistance on integrating the strategies into every day teaching instead of treating as separate curriculum to reduce perceived barriers.
- Focus training and technical assistance on incorporating elements of self-determination into lower grades.
- Continue focusing training and technical assistance on those strategies teachers are not using as frequently to increase their use in the classroom.
- Continue expansion of project audience to include parents, students, administrators and teachers aides.
- Focus training and technical assistance on addressing barriers to implementing self-determination.
- Conduct qualitative research as follow-up to this survey.
- Continue evaluation of the effectiveness of the various training delivery methods on teacher use of self-determination strategies.

# Teacher Survey on Self-Determination

## *Introduction*

In 2004, the Center for Human Development introduced *Teaching Self-Determination in Alaska Schools: A Toolkit for Teachers*, with funding from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. This collection of resources provides a basic framework to build self-determination activities into both traditional and adapted curricula, instructional resources that are aligned with educational standards adopted by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and tools to assess the development of self-determination in students. A unique feature is student educational material in the form of comics, written and illustrated by people with disabilities.

The Toolkit is designed for teachers, parents, students, and other professionals interested in supporting self-determination in home, school, and community settings. The Toolkit has been disseminated in a variety of ways including teacher and paraprofessional training, conference presentations, and the Website. In addition, teachers can take a one-credit course “Teaching Self Determination in Alaskan Schools.”

In 2007, a survey of teachers, who had contact with the project since its inception, was conducted to assess self-determination instruction in Alaskan schools. Specifically, the survey was designed to: 1) identify the elements of self-determination being taught; 2) identify the reasons self-determination skills were not being taught; 3) assess the influence of the Alaska Toolkit on self-determination instruction; and 4) obtain recommendations for improving the cultural appropriateness of the Toolkit.

In 2008, a statewide survey of special education teachers in Alaska was conducted to evaluate project outcomes to inform future practice (Objective 3.0 of the Self-Determination Procedural Safeguard Project). This survey compared the use of self-determination strategies for those who had received training or technical assistance from the project to those who had not.

## *Method*

### *Participants.*

The participant list was developed from the State of Alaska’s database of SPED certified teachers who were teaching in Alaska as of October 1, 2007. Where there were questions about the email address, further contact was made by project staff to ensure the most accurate participant list. The emails of the 77 teachers who were surveyed in 2007 were removed from the list. An invitation to participate in the on-line Teacher Survey on Self-Determination was emailed to 1,103 teachers across the State of Alaska. One-hundred-five e-mail contacts were undeliverable and eight individuals reported not being a special education teacher and thus would not be participating in the survey, reducing the total number of potential participants to 990. Four-hundred forty-five teachers, or 45%, completed the on-line survey.

For comparison sake, data from the original 2007 survey were added back into the data set, where appropriate, when comparing those with experience with the Toolkit and those who had no experience.

Participating teachers were from all regions of the state, with the majority (57%) from Southcentral Alaska. Given Alaska’s special education teachers’ population distribution, the response percentages were representative of the state. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Location of All Participants**

<b>Location of Teacher</b>	<b>Response (n)</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Special Education Teachers Percentage</b>
Southcentral	255	57%	56%
Inside Passage	57	13%	12%
Interior	57	13%	13%
Southwest	51	11%	11%
Far North	25	6%	6%

### *Survey Instrument.*

A survey instrument (Appendix A) was developed based on the 2007 survey and modified to allow for more precise analysis. The original language was used to ensure that the data from the 2007 survey could be used. The original survey was based on a national survey developed by Michael Wehmeyer, a leading researcher and proponent of self-determination in educational settings. The survey contained a combination of forced choice and open-ended questions. Skip logic was used to allow respondents to respond only to questions relevant to them. The survey was loaded in SurveyMonkey, a Web-based survey service, and accessible through a link provided to the respondents.

### *Procedures.*

On February 11, 2008 teachers on the defined list were sent an invitation email (Appendix B) to participate in the confidential on-line survey. Two reminder invitations were sent on February 18 and February 25. The survey was in a forced-choice format, allowing respondents to quickly select the choices that best described their demographics and experiences. The name of the respondent was not collected in the interview dataset.

### *Analysis.*

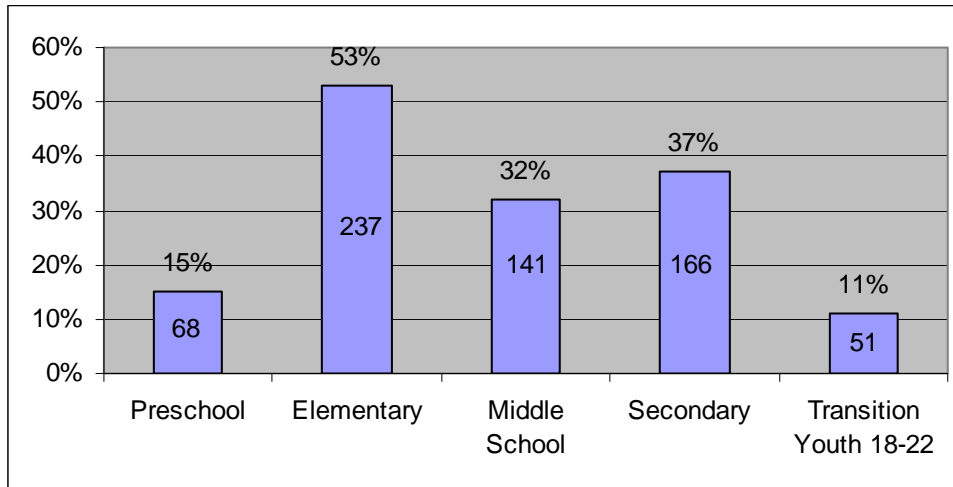
Completed surveys were downloaded from SurveyMonkey into Excel and SPSS databases. Frequency distributions and chi-square analysis were completed.

## *Results*

### *Student Age Group.*

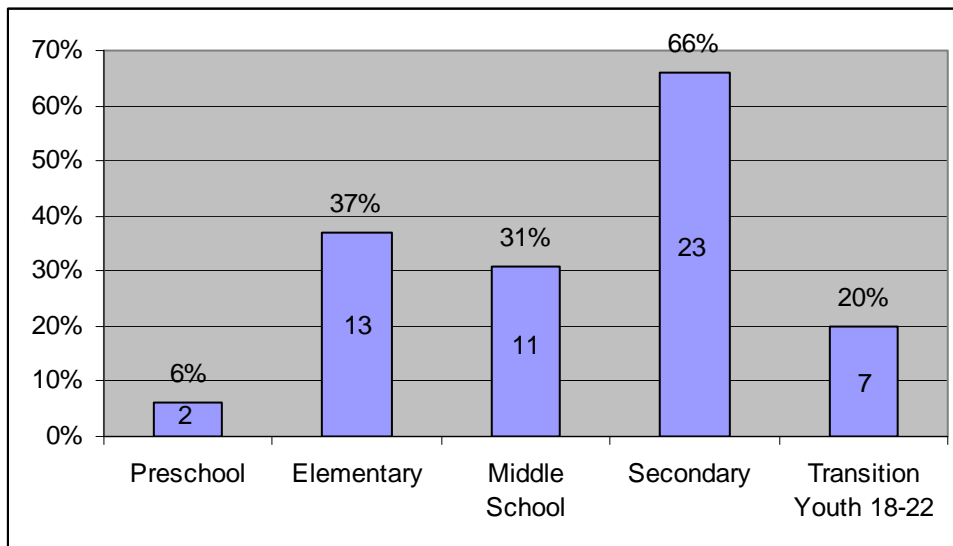
Of the 445 teachers who responded, the majority (53%) worked with elementary age students, though several teachers indicated they worked with more than one age group. In the sub-sample of those teachers who indicated experience with the Toolkit, the majority (66%) worked with secondary students. See Figures 2 and 3 for the breakdown.

**Figure 2. Age Group Total Sample--Second Survey**



\*Total is equal to more than 100% because participants could choose multiple responses

**Figure 3. Age Group for Experience with the Toolkit—Second Survey**



\*Total is equal to more than 100% because participants could choose multiple responses

### *Primary Disability Category.*

Teachers were asked “Your principal teaching assignment is with students identified in what primary disability category?” to indicate under which primary disability their students fell. The majority of teachers (76%) indicated they worked with students with specific learning disabilities, with the second most prevalent autism (51%). See Figure 4 for a breakdown of primary disability categories.

**Figure 4: Primary Disability Category Served by Teachers in Second Survey**

<b>Disability Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Specific Learning Disabilities	76%	338
Autism	51%	225
Speech or Language Impairments	41%	181
Serious Emotional Disturbance	37%	164
Mental Retardation-Mild	34%	153
Multiple Disabilities	33%	149
Mental Retardation-Moderate	23%	103
Traumatic Brain Injury	20%	90
Orthopedic Impairments	16%	69
Mental Retardation-Severe	14%	63
OHI	14%	62
Hearing Impairments	12%	54
Visual Impairments	12%	53
ECDD	7%	30
Deaf	4%	16
Blindness	3%	14
Other	2%	10

Of those teachers who indicated some experience with the Toolkit, the majority (80%) also indicated they worked with students with specific learning disabilities, with the second most prevalent autism (60%). See Figure 5 for the breakdown of primary disability categories in the experienced group.

**Figure 5: Disability Type of Students of Teachers Who have Experience with the Toolkit**

<b>Disability Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Specific Learning Disabilities	80%	28
Autism	60%	21
Speech or Language Impairments	40%	14
Serious Emotional Disturbance	40%	14
Mental Retardation-Mild	40%	14
Traumatic Brain Injury	34%	12
Multiple Disabilities	29%	10
Orthopedic Impairments	20%	7
Mental Retardation-Moderate	20%	7
Mental Retardation-Severe	20%	7
Hearing Impairments	14%	5
Visual Impairments	14%	5
OHI	11%	4
Other	6%	2
Blindness	3%	1
Deaf	3%	1
ECDD	0%	0

(N=35)

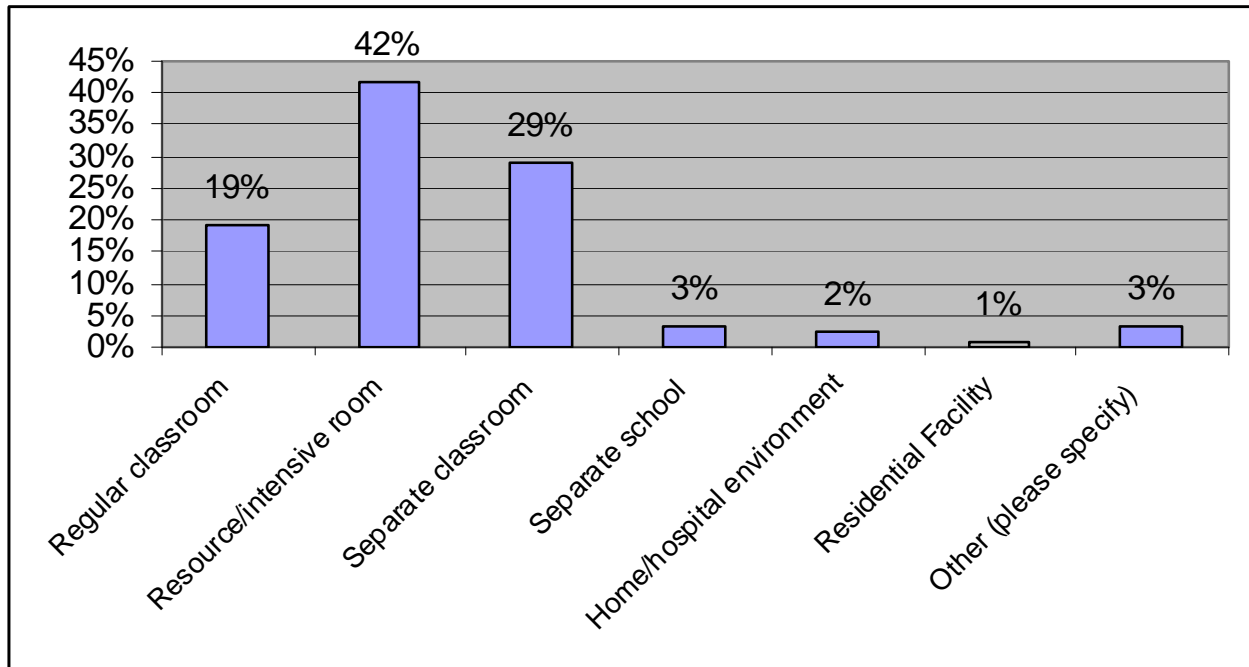
*Educational Environment.*

When asked in which educational environment most of their students received their instruction, the majority of teachers indicated resource/intensive (42%) and separate classroom (29%). See Figures 6 and 7 for the breakdown. For teachers with experience with the Toolkit, the majority were also in resource/intensive environments (40%), with regular classroom (26%) as the second most frequent environment. See Figure 8.

**Figure 6: Educational Environment Second Survey**

<b>Total Sample Educational Environment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Resource/intensive room	42%	186
Separate classroom	29%	129
Regular classroom	19%	85
Separate school	3%	14
Other (please specify)	3%	14
Home/hospital environment	2%	11
Residential Facility	1%	3

**Figure 7. Educational Environment Second Survey**



\*Other included: Learning Center, self-contained, private home and private preschool, physical education, Department Chair, regular and separate classroom, community based

**Figure 8: Classroom Types of Teachers Who Have Experience with the Toolkit**

Experienced Group Educational Environment	Response (n)	Response Percent
Resource/intensive room	14	40%
Regular classroom	9	26%
Separate classroom	8	23%
Separate school	2	6%
Home/hospital environment	1	3%
Other (please specify)	1	3%
Residential Facility	0	0%

*Source of Knowledge of Self-Determination Toolkit.*

When asked from what source they learned about the Toolkit, the majority of the 35 teachers (31%) with experience with the Toolkit indicated the one-credit/two day class – ASSEC, with the second most common the website (23%). See Figure 9 for a breakdown of sources.

**Figure 9: Source of Knowledge of Self-Determination Toolkit**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Response (n)</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>
One-credit/two-day class - ASSEC	11	31%
Website	8	23%
Flyer/email/mailed packet	7	20%
On-site school visit from Toolkit Project Coordinator	5	14%
Co-Worker/friend/agency	5	14%
CHD Conference Presentation	4	11%

\*more than 35 because some respondents chose multiple sources

*Number of Students.*

Of the 445 teachers who reported the number of students they were directly responsible for teaching, the average number of students (total number of students/number of teachers reporting) was 16.3 per teacher with a high of (27+) and low of (0-4). Using the total number of teachers who reported exposure to the Toolkit (35), it can be interpolated that 570.5 (35 \* 16.3) Alaskan students plus the estimated 1,596 students as reported in the 2007 survey (2,166 total), potentially had some exposure to the Toolkit through the beginning of 2008.

*Content or Curricular Area.*

The majority of teachers were responsible for implementing academic curriculum with their students (97%), although a number of teachers also indicated they provided social skills instruction (73%) and vocational/transition instruction (55%). Responses were similar for teachers with experience with the Toolkit. See Figures 10 and 11.

**Figure 10: Content or Curricular Area of Second Survey**

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Response (n)</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>
Academic	430	97%
Social Skills	326	73%
Life Skills/Community-Based Instruction	195	44%
Vocational/Transitional	109	24%
Health/Physical Education	82	18%
Other (please specify)	10	2%

Other includes OT, PT, fine/gross motor, early intervention services, speech therapy, sensory

**Figure 11: Content or Curricular Area of Teachers with Experience with the Toolkit**

Content Area	Response (n)	Response Percent
Academic	31	89%
Social Skills	23	66%
Life Skills/Community-Based Instruction	15	43%
Vocational/Transitional	14	40%
Health/Physical Education	5	14%
Other (please specify)	0	0%

*Use of Elements of Self-determination.*

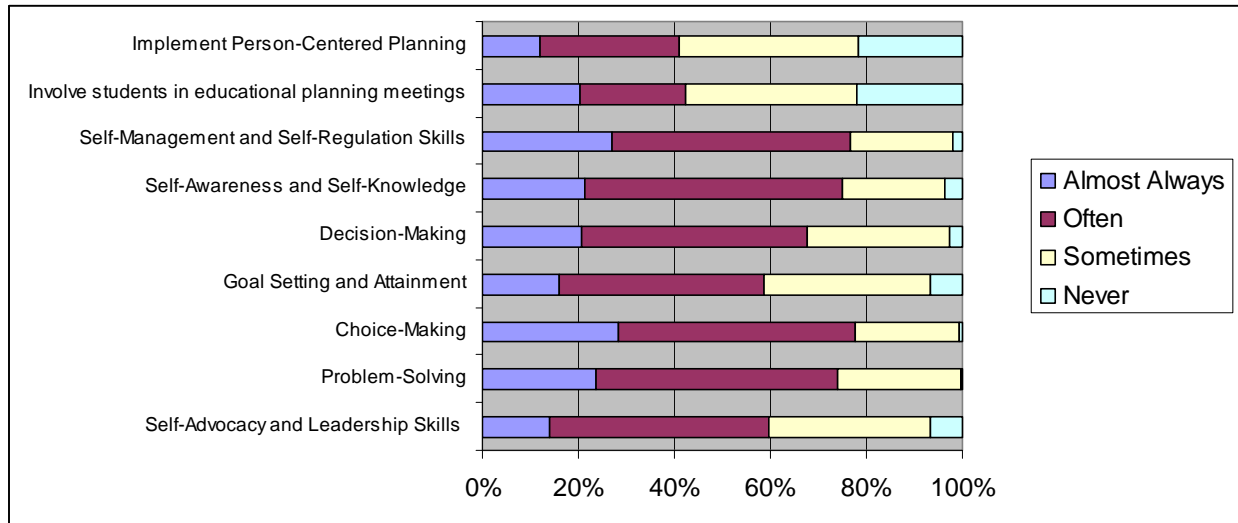
The data from the first and second survey were combined to do comparisons between two groups, those with experience with CHD's Toolkit and those who had no experience. Unlike the first survey where the groups were defined by level of experience, all teachers with any reported type of experience (e.g., through the class, conference presentation, flyers, mailers, on-site visits, visit to website) were combined.

When asked how often they used elements of self-determination with their students, the highest percentage of the combined teacher group indicated they "almost always" or "often" (77%) used choice making and self-management and self-regulation skills (76%). Of the elements listed, these teachers were least likely to implement person-centered planning. See Figures 12 and 13.

**Figure 12: Combined Surveys – Use of Elements of Self-Determination**

	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills	65	215	157	31	468
Problem-Solving	111	238	121	2	472
Choice-Making	134	234	103	3	474
Goal Setting and Attainment	75	199	163	31	468
Decision-Making	98	220	141	12	471
Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge	98	246	98	17	459
Self-Management and Self-Regulation Skills	127	232	100	10	469
Involve students in educational planning meetings	95	103	166	102	466
Implement Person-Centered Planning	55	135	172	101	463

**Figure 13: Combined Surveys--Use of Elements of Self-Determination**

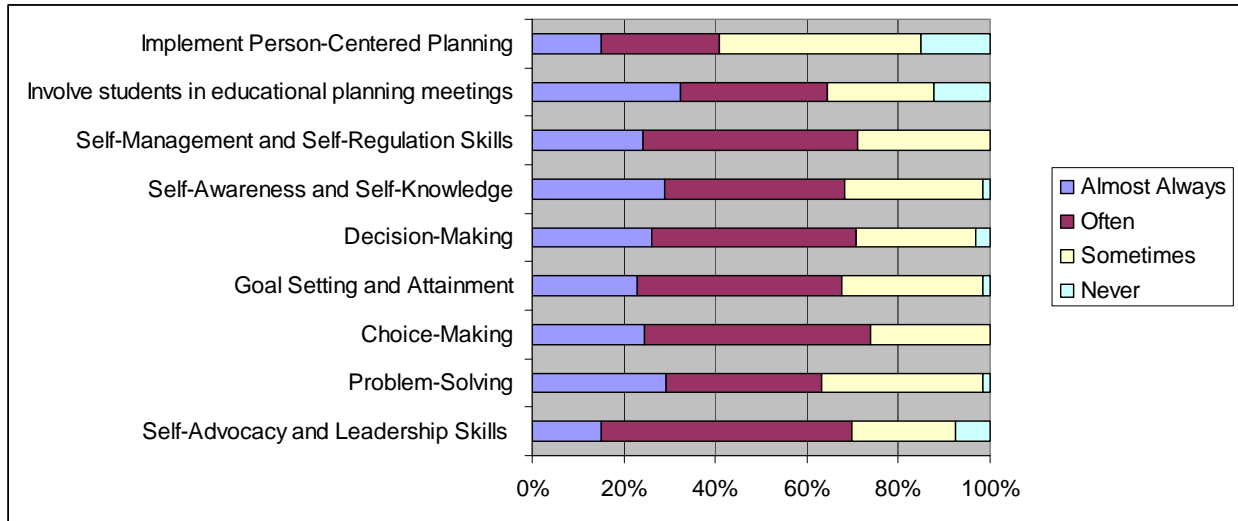


Further analysis was conducted on those individuals who had experience with the Toolkit versus those who had no prior experience with the Toolkit to explore if there were different use patterns between the two groups. Figures 14 through 17 depict those differences on the use of elements of self-determination with their students.

**Figure 14: Combined Surveys Use of Self-Determination--Experience with Toolkit**

	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills	10	36	15	5	66
Problem-Solving	19	22	23	1	65
Choice-Making	16	32	17	0	65
Goal Setting and Attainment	15	29	20	1	65
Decision-Making	17	29	17	2	65
Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge	19	26	20	1	66
Self-Management and Self-Regulation Skills	16	31	19	0	66
Involve students in educational planning meetings	21	21	15	8	65
Implement Person-Centered Planning	10	17	29	10	66

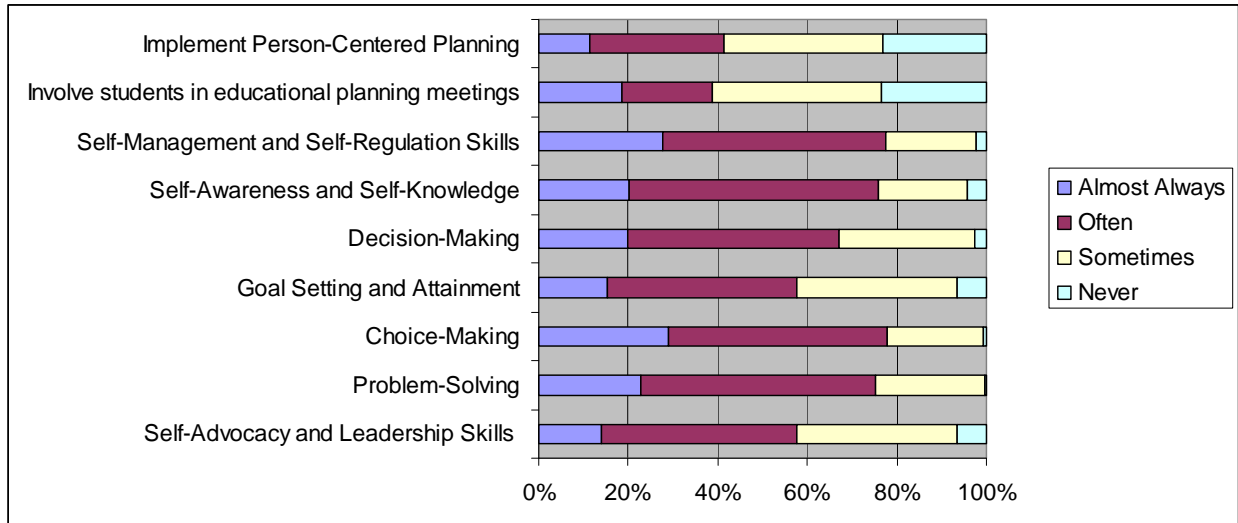
**Figure 15. Combined Surveys Use of Self-Determination--Experience with Toolkit**



**Figure 16: Combined Surveys Use of Self-Determination--No Experience with Toolkit**

	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills	55	172	141	26	394
Problem-Solving	90	207	96	1	394
Choice-Making	114	193	84	3	394
Goal Setting and Attainment	60	165	140	26	391
Decision-Making	78	185	119	10	392
Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge	78	216	77	16	387
Self-Management and Self-Regulation Skills	110	196	80	9	395
Involve students in educational planning meetings	73	80	149	93	395
Implement Person-Centered Planning	45	118	139	91	393

**Figure 17. Combined Surveys Use of Self-Determination--No Experience with Toolkit**



Combining the frequencies in the "never/sometimes" and "often/almost always" categories, a chi-square analysis was conducted on each use of elements. Using the Pearson Chi-Square Test statistically significant differences were found at the  $p < .05$  for “involve students in educational planning meetings” and “problem solving”. Statistically significant differences were also found using Fisher’s Exact Test 1-sided for “Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills”. In other words, those teachers who had experience with the Toolkit were more likely to involve their students in educational planning meetings and teach problem solving, self-advocacy, and leadership skills. See Figure 18 for degrees of freedom, sample size,  $\chi^2$  (both Pearson’s and Fisher’s) and p level for each element.

**Figure 18. Combined Surveys Chi-square on Use of Self-Determination Elements- Experience vs. No Experience to Toolkit**

	df	Sample size	$\chi^2$	Pearson Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig.-2-sided)	Fisher’s Exact Test (2-sided)	Fisher’s Exact Test (1-sided)
Involve students in educational planning meetings	1	460	15.309	<b>.000</b>	.000	.000
Self-management and self-regulation skills	1	461	1.234	.267	.274	.170
Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge	1	453	1.816	.178	.219	.117
Decision-Making	1	457	.344	.557	.668	.332
Goal Setting and Attainment	1	458	2.508	.113	.135	.073
Choice-Making	1	459	.528	.467	.522	.281
Problem Solving	1	459	4.351	<b>.037</b>	.048	.029
Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills	1	460	3.421	.064	.078	<b>.042</b>
Implement person centered planning	1	459	.007	.931	1.000	.522

As secondary school teachers made up the majority of teachers who had experience with the Toolkit, chi-square analyses on the 9 elements of self-determination were conducted examining the differences between secondary school teachers who had experience using the Toolkit versus secondary school teachers who did not have experience with the Toolkit. Further analysis controlled for level of teachers (secondary vs. other level teacher). Using the Pearson Chi-Square Test, statistically significant differences were found at the  $p < .05$  for secondary teachers for “problem solving” and “implementing person centered planning”. Interestingly enough, statistically significant differences were not found for secondary teachers at the “involve students in educational planning meetings”, but there was a significant difference among other level teachers for this element. Fisher’s Exact Test 1-sided did not indicate any other significant differences than those already mentioned. See Figure 19 for degrees of freedom, sample size,  $\chi^2$  (both Pearson’s and Fisher’s) and p level for each element.

**Figure 19: Combined Surveys Chi-square on Use of Self-Determination Elements- Experience vs. No Experience to Toolkit in Secondary School Teachers**

	df	Sample size	$\chi^2$	Pearson Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig.-2-sided)	Fisher's Exact Test (2-sided)	Fisher's Exact Test (1-sided)
Involve students in educational planning meetings						
Secondary Teachers	1	180	.015	.902	1.000	.529
Other Level Teachers	1	280	12.706	<b>.000</b>	.001	.001
Self-management and self-regulation skills						
Secondary Teachers	1	181	1.506	.220	.233	.152
Other Level Teachers	1	280	.001	.979	1.000	.578
Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge						
Secondary Teachers	1	179	.975	.323	.318	.214
Other Level Teachers	1	274	1.361	.243	.309	.179
Decision-Making						
Secondary Teachers	1	181	.183	.669	.682	.406
Other Level Teachers	1	276	.004	.948	1.000	.572
Goal Setting and Attainment						
Secondary Teachers	1	181	.053	.818	.854	.488
Other Level Teachers	1	277	.896	.344	.373	.237
Choice-Making						
Secondary Teachers	1	180	.678	.410	.400	.267
Other Level Teachers	1	279	.173	.677	.613	.424
Problem Solving						
Secondary Teachers	1	180	5.091	<b>.024</b>	.032	.021
Other Level Teachers	1	279	.061	.806	.800	.489
Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills						
Secondary Teachers	1	180	.178	.673	.719	.409
Other Level Teachers	1	280	2.915	.088	.117	.067
Implement person centered planning						
Secondary Teachers	1	181	4.117	<b>.042</b>	.053	.032
Other Level Teachers	1	278	.029	.865	.814	.517

*Reasons for Not Providing Instruction in Self-determination.*

Analysis was conducted using the 445 individuals who participated in the second survey to determine the reasons teachers had for not providing instruction in self-determination in the areas marked as "sometimes or never". The most frequently cited reason was "there are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently." Two other frequently cited reasons were "I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas" and "my students would

not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics.” Their responses were similar to the first survey where the top three reasons were: “I don’t have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas,” “I don’t have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas,” and “there are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.” See Figure 20 for the ranking of reasons. See Figure 21 for the areas individuals marked as doing "sometimes or never" and Figures 22-31 for a breakdown of the reasons to specific elements of self-determination.

**Figure 20: Reason for not Providing Instruction in Self-Determination**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Ranking Score</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	1	1.09
I don’t have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	2	3.09
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	3	3.55
I don’t have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	4	4.00
I haven’t had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	5	4.09
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	6	5.82
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	7	7.45
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	8.5	8.27
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	8.5	8.27
Not a choice	10	10.64
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	11	10.73
Student Interest	12	11.00
Other	13	13.00

**Figure 21: “Never” and “Sometimes” in Self-Determination Elements**

<b>Elements in self-determination</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Student involvement in education planning	260	58.4%
Implementation of person-centered planning	253	56.9%
Goal-setting and attainment	182	40.9%
Self-advocacy and Leadership Skills	177	39.8%
Decision-making	142	32%
Structure classroom environment to promote student-directed learning	118	26.5%
Problem-solving	110	24.7%
Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge	104	23.4%
Self-Management and Self-Regulation Skills	100	22.5%
Choice-Making	98	22%

**Figure 22: Reasons for Not Using Choice-Making**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	43	43.9%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	36	36.7%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	26	26.5%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	25	25.5%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	22	22.4%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	15	15.3%
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	11	11.2%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	8	8.2%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	3	3.1%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	2	2%
Student Interest	1	1%
Not a choice	1	1%
Other <i>*(I teach students that there are always choices to make and that there are consequences of all choices)</i>	1	1%

**Figure 23: Reasons for Not Using Decision-Making**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	63	44.4%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	35	24.6%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	34	23.9%
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	25	17.6%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	18	12.7%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	16	11.3%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	16	11.3%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	11	7.7%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	8	5.6%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	1	0.7%
Not a choice	1	0.7%
Student Interest	0	0%
Other *	0	0%

**Figure 24: Reasons for Not Using Problem-Solving**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	50	45.5%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	40	36.4%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	29	26.4%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	16	14.5%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with	13	11.8%

instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.		
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	13	11.8%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	9	8.2%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	8	7.3%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	4	3.6%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	0	0%
Not a choice	0	0%
Student Interest	0	0%
Other *	0	0%

**Figure 25: Reasons for Not Using Goal-Setting**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	69	38%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	48	26.4%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	37	20.3%
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	35	19.2%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	30	16.5%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	24	13.2%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	18	9.9%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	14	7.7%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	12	6.6%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	5	2.7%
Not a choice	3	1.6%
Student Interest	1	0.5%
Other *	2	1.1%

*(Asking someone who does not understand the parameters of an equation to formulate the expression is simply foolish, inappropriate, and unprofessional; What do you mean by goal-setting and attainment? Is it setting daily goals to get work/homework completed or are you asking for life time goals?)*

**Figure 26: Reasons for Not Using Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	90	50.8%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	45	25.4%
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	39	22%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	35	19.8%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	30	16.9%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	29	16.4%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	13	7.3%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	11	6.2%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	11	6.2%

Not a choice	3	1.7%
Student Interest	1	0.6%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	1	0.6%
Other *	0	0%

**Figure 27: Reasons for Not Using Self-Management and Self-Regulation Skills**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	36	36%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	26	26%
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	20	20%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	20	20%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	19	19%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	14	14%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	11	11%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	6	6%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	5	5%
Not a choice	5	5%
Student Interest	3	3%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	0	0%
Other * <i>(This simply is not an appropriate way to spend my time when anything I do is of so little consequence when viewed in the light of administrators and family; Students are "taught" the skill, but they haven't been using the skill)</i>	2	2%

**Figure 28: Reasons for Not Using Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	40	38.5%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	37	35.6%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	25	24%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	19	18.3%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	18	17.3%
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	15	14.4%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	5	4.8%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	4	3.8%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	4	3.8%
Not a choice	2	1.9%
Student Interest	0	0%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	0	0%
Other *	0	0%

**Figure 29: Reasons for Not Using Student-Involvement in Education Planning**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	78	30%
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	48	18.5%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	45	17.3%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	33	12.7%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	31	11.9%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	19	7.3%
Student Interest	13	5%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	11	4.2%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	9	3.5%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	8	3.1%
Not a choice	6	2.3%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	1	0.4%
Other *	25	9.6%

*\*(Parents often do not want their students involved in IEP meetings; Often, parents do not allow their child to attend IEP meetings; I have left it up to parents; adult meetings; dependent on desires of parent; student not involved directly; left it up to parent for student involvement; family choice; parents don't come to meeting; I have never thought to involve the kids; in the past it has not always been a positive experience; etc.)*

**Figure 30: Reasons for Not Structuring Classroom Environment**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	38	32.2%
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)	37	31.4%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	34	28.8%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	27	22.9%
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	20	17%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	14	11.9%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	6	5.1%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	5	4.2%
Not a choice	3	2.5%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	2	1.7%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	1	0.8%
Student Interest	0	0%
Other *	5	4.2%

*\*(Lack of material resources or money to implement changes in classroom environment; my students who cannot read don't have the prerequisite skills to select a strategy that they think might best teach them how to read; I am new to my position this year—trying to get a handle on it; I address federally recognized disabilities and academic deficiencies that students are not even aware of; not appropriate)*

**Figure 31: Reasons for Not Using Implementation of Person-Centered Planning**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.	61	24.1%
My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their	58	22.9%

characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)		
I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.	56	22.1%
I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination	55	21.7%
I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (i.e., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.)	52	20.5%
I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.	40	15.8%
PreK/Age/Cognitive Level	24	9.5%
Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area	13	5.1%
My students already have adequate self-determination skills.	8	3.2%
Curriculum/Setting Limitations	3	1.2%
Student Interest	2	0.8%
Not a choice	0	0%
Other *	15	6.7%

*(I've had the training from sped conf and will start using it more with my students; the team's openness to it; IEP and PBSP driven; My students would plan to sleep and play video games, forget reading and writing; I don't feel the students are there yet. It has been tried; I think I could change the emphasis in my classes to allow more student-centered goal setting; do such planning when appealing to students goals; etc.)*

### *Use of Self-determination Strategies Because of CHD Self-Determination Toolkit.*

When teachers were asked if they used self-determination strategies more frequently as a result of the UAA Center for Human Development's Self-Determination Toolkit, 46% either "strongly agreed or agreed." See Figure 32 for a breakdown of responses.

**Figure 32: Teacher Use of Self-Determination Strategies as a Result of the Toolkit**

	Teachers who indicated they had taken the one-credit course	Teachers who indicated they had experience with the Toolkit, but had not taken the one-credit course	
Strongly Agree	2	4	
Agree	2	8	
Disagree	5	11	
Strongly Disagree	2	1	

### *Suggestions or Comments on the Toolkit and/or Website.*

Several comments or suggestions were offered about the Toolkit project and on self-determination in general.

Seven individuals responded to an open-ended question about general suggestions/comments on the Toolkit and/or website. Five individuals offered the following suggestions:

- "Easy to use and understand, adapt and modify for all learners."
- "Develop an alternative 'Plan Man' to appeal to a wider range of students."

- “More materials/ideas appropriate for the elementary level/lower ability level.”
- “A component for parents of severely retarded students who cannot make their own decisions.”
- “Difficulty identifying which sheets are for parents/caregivers and which are for the students.”

Eleven participants provided comments regarding the overall topic of self-determination which they were asked to share. Here are some of the comments:

- “I believe ALL of the addressed issues are vital for sp ed student's success." Unfortunately I am not sure the reg ed staff see the value. Since I am a Study Skills teacher supporting the work of the regular ed teachers... we are constantly struggling to stay only 1 step behind instead of 2 or 3! Thank you for taking the time to address these important subjects.”
- “I find the view of student's abilities vary widely from the parent, guardian, teacher and student point of view.”
- “It is a challenge to think of ways to use self-determination with younger students with significant cognitive disabilities.”
- “I think it is a process that needs to start in elementary school.”
- “We are pretty focused on test scores so I've had to cut back on self-directed learning- usually use in context of career exploration.”
- “I haven't taken the training course on teaching self determination yet but will in the near future.”

There were five comments related to the positive impacts that the toolkit has had in teachers' classrooms since being exposed to the Toolkit:

- “I took this class not knowing anything about self-determination. The knowledge I gained through the class and my further exploration of the toolkit, has changed my practices in the classroom and my whole philosophy of student involvement in their educational planning.”
- “I believe these strategies would be beneficial for my students and will start using them since attending the sped conf. I think they work well with RTI and PBS also. I would like to teach self determination and student led IEP conference to our sped teachers in my district.”
- “I found that this is a tool which I will be using quite often from now on; I think it is a wonderful idea.”
- “Self-Determination skills are basically the centerpiece of my classroom. My students have several deficits in this area, but teaching self-confidence is my primary goal.”
- “I have used the LCCC in conjunction with the toolkit. I also use the Stop Abuse curriculum and pick pieces which are appropriate to the ability levels of all the students and young adults.”

The final question asked on the self-determination survey was, “Although you may have not had exposure to the Center for Human Development Self-Determination Toolkit, you may have some comments to share about self-determination that may be beneficial to others. Please provide your thoughts below.” Several survey participants (101) provided feedback, and were grouped according to identifiable themes.

The most prominent theme (30) was surrounding the issues of self-empowering the students, and allowing students the opportunity to take part in their own journey toward success:

- “It is necessary to teach and instruct students with disabilities how to be self determined. A child needs many opportunities to make choices, speak up for oneself and build his/her confidence.”
- “The process of getting to self-determination is so important for my students as it builds self-esteem and ownership into ideas and choices that they make.”
- “It is one way to teach independence or as close to independence as the student is able to accomplish. It also gives the student a sense of pride to be involved in their planning.”
- “I teach my students to be as independent and self-sufficient as possible but it is impulse control and social skills that take time to establish and practice practice re-teach and practice more!”
- “As far as possible, I allow my students to make choices so they feel empowered and feel a sense of control over their environment. However, my students have severe emotional disturbances, autism, or cognitive impairment. I must often do things that are counter-intuitive to me in order to help them succeed, such as not provide choices, provide rigid structure, and limit the choices they are able to make on a daily basis. For my higher functioning students, I love using and teaching these skills. I have had great success turning around a particularly difficult student by showing him how to make and reach goals, make choices about what direction he wanted to go, and even make choices about when he felt ready to go to a regular ed classroom.”

Another theme combines the issues of self-empowering students, but emphasizes a comprehensive team approach of key people, i.e., parents, teachers, special ed teachers, schools, school districts, etc. Of the 18 comments, here are a few samples:

- “Alaska needs more programs/supports for all individuals with disabilities to be given the opportunity for self-determination.”
- “Middle School sped requires us to teach a prescribed math and language arts curriculum. Not only are these quite good, but we have little time to plan because there is intense focus on getting every piece of special ed paperwork completed correctly--all our time has to be spent on doing this paperwork, so there is little to no time and energy left to be creative in one's teaching...something I think is a real failure on the part of special ed in the Anchorage School District--to provide time to create fabulous learning atmospheres. I squeeze self determination in when I can, but sometimes I have to barrel ahead because I am required to get through the book...which WILL help them the next year.”
- “I feel this is an on-going, life skill that can be incorporated into the classroom through many avenues. It is also dependent on the personality and style of each classroom teacher. Parent involvement or lack thereof, is a crucial component to developing self-determination in secondary students. MANY parents are afraid to let their student "fail" and breaking the enabling cycle, as a teacher, is a huge challenge.”
- “I would use self-determination techniques more often if the school, teachers and parents I work with would believe in their students and children more. Most of my students don't even understand what an IEP is or what it has to do with their education. This is the first year I have worked in this district, so this is something I hope to work on in the future. I don't know if this is the kind of comment that will help you, but I believe that the only

way "self-determination" is going to work is if parents are made aware of how to work with their children at home and how to help their children advocate for themselves in school. Then SPED teachers need to reinforce the child's abilities to make choices and their abilities to advocate for their "rights" in the classroom so that regular ed teachers understand that SPED students have "CANS" not "CAN'TS" in their lives."

- "Parents need education about self determination so that they see that it is good for their child. Sometimes it is difficult for parents to give up the "control" that they have over their children."

Ten participants stressed the importance of self-determination in ALL students and/or ALL teachers, and not just students with disabilities - or sped teachers. Here are a couple of the comments:

- "Our goal is to try to promote independent thinking and actions for all children."
- "I believe that self-determination is an important life skill for everyone to have, not just students with disabilities."
- "Might have required staff development in these areas."
- "It's difficult to bring self-determination when dealing with student who are considered emotionally unstable because often the staff is not as trained as they need to be, the parents have little or no interest or just do not "get it" or the leader (i.e., principal) does not understand how to lead or know how to incorporate good teamwork. A special ed teacher is overworked and the demands are simply exhausting (if you care to do your job correctly) and we cannot do it ourselves. Despite all the talk, the prof. dev. opportunities, the laws, the surveys, etc., there just isn't enough support for the special ed teacher in the first place in many schools. No wonder so many of us drop out after so many years. The Self-Determination Toolkit may be very useful, yet I have not heard of it in our district. Unless it is something that we teachers can do (a practical application), then how is it beneficial?"
- "I would hope that self-determination is promoted by all teachers. If not maybe there should be in-services with successful examples on how teachers can modify their classroom instruction to promote this."

Four people addressed the rural or remoteness dynamics regarding self-determination. Here are a couple of these comments:

- "I have found that it is hard to get students in isolated areas to be self motivated in school as they don't see the need for it. They have their lives planned around the area and do not see any reason to look outside of their box/culture."
- "I think the concept of self-determination is wonderful, but perhaps not applicable out here in the village. Most of my students do not think in terms of "the future" and cannot be forced to think that way. Try as I may to open up the world for my students, "village life" is too important."
- "When children are young, one gives them the reason for learning and why and this process journeys all through school. As they grow older, opportunities for the real world are introduced and explored. Here decisions are made by the students and guidance through the decisions is important. I do see a need for a class on how to make it in the outside world for the career they go into-especially if the student is coming from the Bush!"

Six participant's comments focused on how the education system is more focused on testing and test scores and how this heavily interferes with teaching self-determination. Here are a few samples of the comments addressing this theme.

- “Although I have found classroom teachers open to such ideas as self determination, testing is making such concepts a thing of the past. Test scores are becoming too important. Many teachers are being asked to go back to drill and practice.”
- “It would be great for all the students to get the Self-Determination Toolkit as all of our students need more help in this area. But between state testing and requirements it is difficult to convince staff that this is important. Adding to that the high turnover does not help with this.”

Fifteen participants stressed the importance of teaching self-determination, but pointed out that there is a lack of materials addressing lower-level functioning students due to their age or cognitive ability; and/or that we need to begin teaching self-determination skills at an early age, or as soon as possible. Here are a few of the comments:

- “Preschool teachers are usually teaching and encouraging the most basic parts of self-determination.”
- “Self determination in the younger grades/levels is not always possible, students often need to be guided in what they need to learn, however they often want to learn what I am teaching and to that extent, they practice self-determination.”
- “The majority of my students cannot or do not work independently; someone has to be right next to them. From these questions it sounds like a student has to have a reasonable work ethic and ability to focus.”
- “I believe it is important to start teaching these skills to students early on and to build skills each year. Most of my students that I receive from elementary have not been exposed to self-determination.”
- “As a Sp Ed pre-school teacher I felt that some of the questions were not applicable in the sense they were written. However, I believe teaching self-determination is very important and can/should be addressed at all age levels.”
- “Students need to be given responsibility for themselves instead of being overly enabled beginning in elementary school. Too many of our students reach high school without having been held accountable for their learning. Too many students have been overly enabled instead of being forced to accept responsibility and to do their work instead of using their disability as an excuse for laziness and lack of effort. They need to be forced to step up to the plate.”

Twenty individuals expressed that they would be interested in learning more about the Toolkit, or are interested in taking the course. Here is a sample of these requests:

- “I am interested in this toolkit. Much of my own "bag of tricks" has become irrelevant or ineffective with our current curriculum structure.”
- “I would like more information on self-determination.”
- “I would be interested in taking a summer course on Self-Determination.”
- “I have heard of the toolkit just from reading the flier for the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference, but I have not seen it or had training about it.”

- “I would like to know more about the Center for Human Development Self-Determination Toolkit. I am a firm believer in positive discipline.”
- “Some of the things mentioned in the survey sound wonderful. I am just not up to speed with these programs. I would like to learn more about the Self Determination Toolkit.”

Twelve individuals stressed the importance of teaching self-determination skills to assist students with their transition to the “real world” and being able to be as self-sufficient as possible. Here is a sample of these requests:

- “Self determination is the primary area of instruction for intensive needs students who will have to find their way in their post-school world. We work every day on decision making and personal development.”
- “It is critical that teenagers have skills for self-determination as they will soon be in a world that will require the skills be put to use.”
- “In the end we are all responsible for our own lives and must learn the skills to be so.”
- “Self determination is a very positive approach for many students with learning disabilities; however, guidance must also be provided these individuals. Depending upon their motivational forces, there are times when they have to learn to live and learn within their means. Kids who have educational problems from grade one through grade eight, have poor self image. One of my major efforts involves building a new image that is in line with positive thinking. This can be a daunting task and quite often takes a student four years of high school to come to that realization that they can be successful as an adult.”
- “I have students use the AKCIS program (Alaska Career Information System) to assist students in focusing on a career area and exploring specific careers. This is done with the Career Center Counselor, with goals appropriate to this area included on the IEP. Goals are geared toward career area identification, career exploration, finding training/schools, applying for post-sec training/education, applying for scholarships. Students are also exposed to Vocational Rehabilitation and Access Alaska.”

One teacher’s comment seemed to be the most appropriate to close this portion of the Report:

“Teaching can be exhausting, challenging, ever dynamic, and emotionally draining. But just stop and think, each smile, laughter, each parent that says thank you. If you can positively effect even one child per school year, imagine how many children you will have an impact on during your career. My preschoolers with special needs make my heart smile. I wake up everyday with excitement to attend school to make a difference. And while there are definitely moments of being completely discouraged, this job is completely worth it and I could not imagine doing anything else.”

### *Discussion*

Findings suggest that the CHD Self-Determination Toolkit has had a positive impact on the use of self-determination strategies by Alaskan teachers. There were statistically significant differences between those who had experience using the Toolkit and those who had no experience in the areas of involving students in educational planning meetings, teaching problem solving, and teaching self-advocacy and leadership skills. Among secondary teachers who had experience with the Toolkit, they were more likely to implement person centered planning than

those who had no experience with the Toolkit. Also, there were several qualitative comments about the positive impacts the Toolkit has had in teachers' classrooms.

A national study found that the two primary barriers to teaching elements of self-determination reported by special education teachers were "students would not benefit from instruction in these areas" and teachers "did not believe they had sufficient information or training to do so" (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes 2000 p. 63). In the 2007 survey, Alaskan teachers rated these as the lowest barriers (only 8% said students would not benefit from instruction in these areas and only 12% said they didn't have sufficient training/information) to teaching elements of self-determination. However, these two barriers did appear in the top five reasons in the current survey. This difference is possibly because participants in the 2007 survey were only Alaskan teachers who had contact with the project by participating in training or requesting materials, and already believed in the benefits of self-determination. The 2008 group of special education teachers were more representative of teachers as a whole, and reported barriers that were consistent with national findings. The top three most frequently cited reasons for not providing instruction in self-determination by these teachers were: there are other areas in which students need instruction more urgently; insufficient time to provide instruction in these areas; and students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics. These findings reflect the pressure that No Child Left Behind has placed on teachers. Teachers seem to perceive that teaching self-determination competes with other instructional areas. Also, acquiring self-determination skills is a process that should begin early. The teachers in the current survey seem to perceive that some components of self-determination are age and/or disability specific. These findings suggest that the project should focus on how self-determination can be infused into the regular curriculum and emphasize how to teach self-determination with all levels of disabilities and ages.

A 2008 study by Thoma, Pannozzo, Fritton, and Bartholomew on preservice teachers' understanding of self-determination, found that pre-service teachers focused on a limited number of core component skills when describing self-determination. Opportunities for choice making and decisions in the classroom were most frequently described, while participants seldom described how they would address core skills such as risk taking, self-awareness, and self-evaluation. Similar to these results, the combined 2007/2008 Alaskan special education teacher surveys indicated choice making and self management/self-regulation skills were used most frequently, while goal setting and attainment; and self-advocacy and leadership skills were used the least. There is a need "to gain a greater understanding of teachers' beliefs and decision-making processes in regard to their understanding of the concept of self-determination and implementation of practices that support students with disabilities to become more self-determined (Thoma et al., p. 11). This is especially true with the perception that "providing choice is at 'the center' of self-determination" (p. 11).

Qualitative results of the survey indicate teachers are very interested in the concept of self-determination. Many teachers stressed the importance of self-determination in all students, regardless of ability or disability, and all teachers, regardless of level or specialty. Several teachers wrote about the issue of self-empowering students and allowing them to take part in their own journey toward success. Others wrote about the importance of teaching self-determination skills to assist students with their transition to the "real world" and being able to be as self-sufficient as possible.

Other comments focused on suggestions for improving the delivery and/or focus of teaching self-determination. Several teachers emphasized the need for a comprehensive team

approach of key individuals, (e.g., parents, teachers, special education teachers, schools, and school districts when incorporating the elements of self-determination into a student's life). Others noted the unique dynamics associated with students living in rural or remote areas of Alaska and the difficulties in implementing self-determination. There were several comments on how the education system is more focused on testing and test scores and how this interferes with teaching self-determination. Finally, several teachers indicated that there is a lack of materials addressing lower-level functioning students due to their age or cognitive ability and there needs to be a push to begin teaching self-determination skills at an earlier age.

In regards to the Toolkit, several individuals indicated an interest in learning more about it and expressed an interest in taking the course. There were suggestions about how to modify or expand the Toolkit including: developing an alternative to "Plan Man"; providing more materials for the lower grades and/or ability level; and making it clear which sheets are for parents/caregivers and which are for students. Finally, there were several positive comments about the impact the Toolkit has had in the classroom.

One limitation to this study should be considered when interpreting results. Although the response rate was high (45%) and respondents were geographically representative of the special education teachers in the state, this was not a random sample. Given this limitation and based on the findings, the project will implement the following recommendations: (1) given that teachers indicated they were limited by time and instructional requirement constraints, additional emphasis on strategies for infusing self-determined behaviors into day-to-day curriculum will be continued, specifically framing it in the context of student-directed learning strategies incorporated in academic, vocational, community participation, and life skills curricular goals; (2) given that many of the teachers from the lower grades (i.e., younger than secondary) indicated they did not implement elements of self-determination because of the age of their students, a new focus on how to incorporate the elements of self-determination into the younger grades will be implemented; (3) while it appears that many of these teachers are encouraging student-led IEPs and other elements of self-determination, there will be a continued focus on elements not used as frequently through additional training and technical assistance; (4) to increase awareness and buy-in, the project audience will continue to expand to include parents, students, and administrators; (5) using the survey information on reasons for not using different elements of self-determination, training and/or technical assistance will occur on how to address these barriers; (6) follow-up qualitative research based on this survey will occur around implementing elements of self-determination in the classroom; and (7) continued evaluation of the effectiveness of the various training delivery methods on teacher use of self-determination strategies will be conducted.

## Appendix A Survey

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

## 1. Current status

Completing the survey means that you have given consent to include your answers with those of others in the analysis. Thank you for your input.

1. Are you currently teaching special education in Alaska?

Yes

No

## 2. Geographic regions

Please select the geographic region in which you are teaching.



2. In which geographic region do you teach?

Far North

Interior

Southwest

Southcentral

Inside Passage

3. What age group do you currently teach? (Check all that apply)

Preschool

Elementary

Middle School

Secondary

Transition Youth 18-22

## 3. Disability category

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

4. Your principal teaching assignment is with students identified in what primary disability category? (Check all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Learning Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Autism                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Retardation-Mild        | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech or Language Impairments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Retardation-Moderate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Emotional Disturbance  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Retardation-Severe      | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Impairments            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traumatic Brain Injury         | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Disabilities          | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Impairments             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orthopedic Impairments         | <input type="checkbox"/> Blindness                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)         |   |

## 4. Classroom dynamics

5. Students for whom you are primarily responsible for instruction, receive their instruction in which of the following educational environments? (Check the one where you do most of your instruction)

- Regular classroom
- Separate classroom
- Residential facility
- Resource/intensive room
- Separate school
- Home/hospital environment
- Other (please specify)

6. How many students are you directly responsible for teaching?

- 0-5
- 6-11
- 12-16
- 17-21
- 22-26
- 27+

## 5. Content and curricular area

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

7. What content area are you responsible for implementing with students? (Check all that apply)

- Academic
- Social Skills
- Life Skills/Community-Based Instruction
- Vocational/Transitional
- Health/Physical Education
- Other (please specify)

## 6. Self-determination questions

Now we will ask you questions about the different self-determination aspects that may be taught in your classroom (s). There is a series of about 10 self-determination aspects that we will ask you about. Click on the Next >> button to continue.

## 7. Choice-making

Choice-making: teaching students to identify interests, express preferences, make choices; structuring instructional activities to provide students the opportunity to select preferences.

8. How often do you use choice-making with your students?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 8. Choice-making Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

9. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with choice-making? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 9. Decision-making

Decision-making: teaching students to make effective decisions, providing opportunities to participate in making decisions about their education and postschool life.

10. How often do you use decision-making with your students?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 10. Decision-making Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

11. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with decision-making? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 11. Problem-solving

Problem-solving: teaching students to systematically solve problems, providing opportunities to participate in problem-solving activities.

12. How often do you use problem-solving with your students?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 12. Problem-solving Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

13. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with problem-solving? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 13. Goal setting and attainment

Goal setting and attainment: teaching students to set goals, participate in goal-setting activities, develop plans to achieve goals.

14. How often do you use goal setting and attainment with your students?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 14. Goal-setting and attainment Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

15. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with goal setting and attainment? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 15. Self-advocacy and leadership skills

Self-advocacy and leadership skills: teaching students to know and stand up for their rights, to communicate effectively and assertively, to be an effective leader or team member.

16. How often do you use self-advocacy and leadership skills with your students?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 16. Self-advocacy and leadership skills Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

17. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with self-advocacy and leadership skills? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 17. Self-management and self-regulation skills

Self-management and self-regulation skills: teaching students to monitor and evaluate their own behavior, select and provide their own reinforcement, set their own schedule, and to self-direct learning through strategies like self-instruction.

18. How often do you use self-management and self-regulation skills with your students?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 18. Self-management and self-regulation Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

19. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with self-management and self-regulation skills? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 19. Self-awareness and self-knowledge

Self-awareness and self-knowledge: teaching students to identify their own strengths and limitations, to identify their own preferences, interests, and abilities and apply that knowledge to their advantage.

20. How often do you use self-awareness and self-knowledge with your students?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 20. Self-awareness and self-knowledge Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

21. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with self-awareness and self-knowledge? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 21. Involvement in educational planning

22. How often do you involve your student in educational planning meetings?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 22. Involvement in education planning Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

23. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with student involvement in education planning? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 23. Structuring classroom environment

Student-directed learning is a tool that supports self-determination.

24. Do you structure your classroom environment to promote student-directed learning, a strategy that might promote self-determination?

Yes

No

## 24. Structuring classroom environment Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

25. What are the reason(s) you selected "No" to the question of structuring your classroom environment to promote student-directed learning? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 25. Implementation of person-centered planning

Person-centered planning is a process-oriented approach to empowering individuals with disabilities. It focuses on the individual, and their needs, by putting them in charge of defining the direction for their lives.

Person-centered planning involves individuals choosing their own pathways to success; the planners (i.e. teachers) simply help them to figure out where they want to go and how best to get there.

26. How often do you implement person-centered planning?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost Always

## 26. Implementation of person-centered planning Why?

# Self-Determination Teacher Survey

27. What are the reasons you identified as doing "never" or "sometimes" with implementation of person-centered planning? (Check all that apply)

- My students already have adequate self-determination skills.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- I don't have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- I don't have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which my students need instruction more urgently.
- My students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (level of ability, capacity to engage in behavior, etc.)
- I haven't had sufficient training or information on teaching self-determination.
- I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to self-determination.
- Other (please specify)

## 27. Toolkit exposure and effectiveness

28. Have you had any experience with using the UAA Center for Human Development's Self-Determination Toolkit?

- Yes
- No

## 28. Please rate your agreement to the following statement:

29. Would you say that you use self-determination strategies more frequently as a result of the UAA Center for Human Development's Self-Determination Toolkit?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

## 29. Sources

30. From what source did you learn about the UAA Center for Human Development Self-Determination Toolkit? (Check all the apply)

- One-credit/ two day class - ASSEC
- Website-www.alaskachd.org/toolkit
- Center for Human Development Conference Presentation
- On-site school visit from Toolkit Project Coordinator
- Other (please specify)

## Self-Determination Teacher Survey

31. Are there any strategies, lessons or approaches in the Toolkit that need modification for cultural appropriateness? If yes, please explain and list the ethnic group(s).

32. Please add any suggestions or comments on the Toolkit and/or website.

33. Please provide any other comments about self-determination you may have.

### 30. No Toolkit experience

34. Although you may have not had exposure to the Center for Human Development Self-Determination Toolkit, you may have some comments to share about self-determination that may be beneficial to others. Please provide your thoughts below.

### 31. Thank you for your input!

Thank you for your time! You will now be redirected to the Center for Human Development Website.

## Appendix B Invitation Email

Dear Special Educator,

The Center for Human Development at the University of Alaska Anchorage is conducting a survey on Teaching Self-Determination in Alaskan Schools: A Toolkit for Educators, a project funded by the Department of Early Childhood and Education/Special Education. Your feedback will be helpful in improving awareness, access, implementation and research on this project.

We are conducting a brief confidential survey (4-6 minutes) about your experience with self-determination (The link to the survey is the following: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=utEB\\_2bsgGyNZR\\_2bg\\_2byPi\\_2b\\_2bkQ\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=utEB_2bsgGyNZR_2bg_2byPi_2b_2bkQ_3d_3d)). The results will be compiled and provided to the Department of Early Childhood and Education/Special Education and may be used in journal articles and/or conference presentations.

Your participation is voluntary, though we hope you will respond. You are free to choose to participate or not. There are no specific benefits to you personally for participating in this project. If you choose to participate, you are free to stop at any time. Please be assured that your responses will be confidential. Your individual answers will never be identified in any report. Completing the survey means that you have given consent to include your answers with those of others in the analysis.

This survey is being conducted by the Center for Human Development using the services of SurveyMonkey.com. All information will be kept in secure locations. All identifying information, including your email address, will be removed from the data after the survey is completed. SurveyMonkey.com will not keep record of your email address, or give it to any other person or organization. You may view their privacy policy at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/help/Privacy.asp>

Should you have any questions about this project please contact Karen Heath, Center for Human Development, (call 907-274-6273 or e-mail [anklh8@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:anklh8@uaa.alaska.edu)), or if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Douglas Causey in UAA's Office of Research and Graduate Studies (call 907-786-1099).

Your time and attention to this survey is greatly appreciated. Please use the Web link below to start the survey.  
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=utEB\\_2bsgGyNZR\\_2bg\\_2byPi\\_2b\\_2bkQ\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=utEB_2bsgGyNZR_2bg_2byPi_2b_2bkQ_3d_3d)

Sincerely,

Sharon Cannon  
Project Coordinator  
Center for Human Development  
2702 Gambell St. Suite 103

University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
1-800-243-2199/voice mail 264-6232  
[ansec1@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:ansec1@uaa.alaska.edu)  
[www.alaskachd.org/toolkit](http://www.alaskachd.org/toolkit)

(If clicking on the link does not work, please copy and paste all of the link text into your browser address bar. If you are still having problems, please contact Karen Heath at [anklh8@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:anklh8@uaa.alaska.edu) or at 907-264-6273.)

## References

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