

The logo is a black, stylized starburst or jagged-edged shape with multiple points. The text "Alliance for Self-Determination" is centered within this shape in a white, sans-serif font.

Alliance for Self-Determination

**Alliance for Self-Determination  
Principles For Individual and Family  
Self-Determination Partnerships  
June, 2001**

Families are defined as two or more people who regard themselves as a family and carry out the functions that families typically perform. They may or may not be related by blood or marriage; they may or may not live together; and they are almost always influenced by their own definition of family.

The following principles relate to the definition and expression of self-determination within families and the development of partnerships among family and individual leaders to advance self-determination.

1. Everyone should have the choice to be part of some type of family. Relying on other people can be a good thing so long as the parties agree to it.
2. Families usually hold generational expectations for the expression of self-determination by all family members, including grandparents, parents and children.
3. How families and individuals view self-determination and work together to express it will be based on their culture and values. Self-determination should be defined, expressed and respected within the culture of individuals and families.

4. Individuals with disabilities and other family members may vary in their commitment to, and expression of, the principles of self-determination due to factors such as nature and extent of disability, experience with the service system and the other environmental challenges they confront.
  5. Many individuals with disabilities have not had their self-determination supported by their family members, however some family members have been major allies for self-determination. We should be cautious in over-generalizing and assuming that all families are unsupportive.
  6. Many factors, such as traditional societal expectations that families should be responsible for the lives of individuals with disabilities and a lack of professional and system support, have made it difficult for many families to support, and individuals to express, self-determination. We need to learn more about the barriers that families and individuals have faced and what they believe would increase their support for self-determination.
  7. The foundations for self-determination are laid in the earliest years. Therefore, families should be made aware from the earliest years of ways to facilitate the self-determination of their children with disabilities.
  8. It is in the best interest of the national self-determination movement for cross-disability individual and family leaders to build a common vision for self-determination.
  9. Individuals with disabilities should have the primary national leadership role in setting the self-determination agenda, and family and individual leaders should work together to move the agenda forward.
  10. Disability organizations should make self-determination a priority, including focusing on it in their conferences, publications, advocacy and research, and looking at ways to promote partnerships among individuals and families.
-