

CBI Consultants Middle School Self-Determination Curriculum

"A self-determined person is one who sets goals, makes decisions, sees options, solves problems, speaks up for himself or herself, understands what supports are needed for success, and knows how to evaluate outcomes."

(Martin and Marshall, 1999)

CBI Consultants Middle School Self-Determination curriculum was designed on the principle that self-determination skills need to be explicitly taught at a young age so that individuals with disabilities can become active agents in their own lives. The curriculum is composed of interactive and dynamic lesson plans that help students develop new skills that they will use in their everyday lives.

Self-determination theory concerns itself with motivation and our intrinsic (or natural) desire to behave in effective and healthy ways. Research shows that children and adolescents learn skills through opportunities in such areas as choice-making, decision making, problem solving, and goal setting (Erwin et al., 2015). These abilities rest on the pillars of self-knowledge, self-regulation, and effective engagement with others. The end result of the sessions will be a deeper understanding among the students of their:

- *Self-awareness:* Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations
- *Self-Management:* Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals
- *Social Awareness:* Showing an understanding for others in a social context
- *Relationship Skills:* Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict.
- *Responsible Decision-Making:* Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

The lesson plans in the CBI's Self-Determination curriculum embed Ministry of Education prescribed learning outcomes. Sessions focus on goals and decision making that will help students implement planning techniques to support their future goals.



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CBI's Self-Determination Middle School Curriculum also explores healthy relationships and what it means to act appropriately within one's social circle (e.g. peer influence, stereotyping, gossiping, etc.). Safety and injury prevention are also addressed.

The curriculum is composed of 3 modules with 60 sessions in total. Module 1 is comprised of 11 sessions and focuses on self-discovery. Here students will examine their likes, dislikes, interests, challenges and learning styles. Module 2 is comprised of 10 sessions and targets social skills by addressing topics such as teamwork, bullying, making friends, effective listening and communication, and peer pressure. Finally, module 3 is comprised of 39 sessions and outlines rules, consequences, goal setting, problem solving, and the rights and responsibilities of students and citizens. The end result of this module is a presentation of the students' goals that can be included into their IEP planning. At the end of the curriculum, the overall objective is that each student will have a deeper understanding of their:

- Self-awareness;
- Emotions and values as well as strengths and limitations;
- Ability to self-manage;
- Ability to manage emotions and behaviours to achieve their goals;
- Social awareness;
- Understanding for others in a social context;
- Relationship skills;
- Positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict;
- Responsible decision-making;
- Ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behaviour.

Using the self-advocacy framework within the curriculum, students are encouraged to express themselves during class time. This empowers students to generalize these strategies to other situations which they may encounter. Self-discovery is crucial in self-advocacy, because self-discovery asserts that by knowing ourselves and our goals, we can effectively communicate our needs to others and hold true to decisions that are important to us. Self-Determination curriculum teaches students how to do this respectfully and successfully. Research shows that planting roots of self-determination during the early years can prepare children to take a more active and positive role in their own well-being (Erwin et al., 2015). With explicit instruction in self-determination, students will learn the essential skills to become active agents in their own lives.

For more information on CBI Consultants Middle School Self-Determination Curriculum, please email us at info@cbiconsultants.com.