

Monthly tips and resources for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

Ways to Increase Independence

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Individuals with disabilities require self-advocacy and independent living skills to live self-determined and fulfilling lives. It is important for them to make their desires, preferences, and needs known and acknowledged by others.

To help those with disabilities to live a more independent lifestyle, [The Endeavour Foundation](#) offers a range of guidance including tips for how to increase support.

Seek to support, not control

Controlling the situations in which someone with a disability participates takes away an important natural learning experience. Sometimes, as parents and guardians we control to protect. But when we exclude them from making individual choices and having experience, we deny their individual rights and dignity of risk. The most impactful learning can take place in this experience.

Instead of trying to manage every interaction and decision, it can help to gradually allow individuals to make decisions and demonstrate independence. We can do this while offering support and that may be as simple as some small tweaks to the language used, such as asking what they would like to do instead of telling them what to do.

Establish a trusted support network

Trying to do everything by ourselves can make us very tired, and it can also stop our loved ones from learning how to live on their own, especially if they have disabilities. It's important to have a group of people to help out, like a support team for the whole family. This team can consist of family members, friends, neighbors, and other people from our community.

In this support team, individuals with disabilities can find people to talk to openly and get help in a natural way to learn and become more independent. This way, they can learn to do things on their own while knowing they have a friendly team to back them up when needed.

Search for meaning, not judgment

Since our understanding of a situation or behavior may vary from someone else's, it is essential to view situations or perceived negative behaviors from their perspective. As our children transition into adulthood, our relationship with them evolves, so considering their viewpoint in different scenarios can improve your relationship and eliminate barriers to independence.

As individuals with disabilities mature, their journey into independence becomes crucial and empowering. Your role is to allow choice and independent experiences—while providing the necessary support—to propel them toward a self-reliant, independent adulthood.

Resources

- Endeavor Foundation—[21 tips that promote independence in adults with disability](#).

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