



Family & Educator Partnership



Self Determination: Practice Responsibility

When teens leave high school and move on to the next chapter of their lives, we want them to be as prepared as possible for their futures.

Young people can practice many skills before they graduate that will help them in later life. One thing we can do as supporting adults, whether parents or teachers, is to provide increasing opportunities for responsibility.

Responsibility may be summed up as taking care of ourselves and others. It means that when we have obligations, we meet them. If we are acting responsibly, we contribute to our communities, families and to our own well-being.

Just like many other skills, the best way to learn to be responsible is through practice. An old parenting strategy that supports this theory reads something like "Never do anything for your child that he can do for himself." With that in mind, some ideas for opportunities (your teenager may not look at them this way) to increase responsibility might be:

Take care of yourself

- Set your own alarm and get ready for school/work on time
- Take care of your own clothing (selecting what to wear and making sure it is ready to wear; doing your own laundry, ironing, putting clothes away)
- Clean your own room; remove trash etc.
- Fix your own meals
- Schedule your own doctor and other appointments
- Manage your schedule and time to complete tasks (school work, projects, etc.)

Take care of others/contribute to the well-being of others:

- Complete household chores
- Run errands for other family members
- Help prepare meals/ clean up after meals
- Help with yard work
- Supervise younger brothers/ sisters
- Participate in community events
- Volunteer activities (school, church, community)

As youth take on more responsibility, they also gain confidence in their ability and recognize the impact they have on others. It is important to build on individual strengths and make sure there are consequences/ accountability for actions taken and choices that are made. If a young person does not follow-through with their responsibility, it is important that adults do not bail them out. A teen will probably learn more from wearing a dirty uniform to the game than if she wears a clean uniform that Dad hastily washed after she forgot to launder it.

For more information Contact FEP Coordinators: Loni Jorgenson, 641-231-1437/ 641-329-4242 or April Wooldridge, 641-485-9166/ 641-753-3564.



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