

For Students Receiving Support!

Kentucky
Peer Support
Network
Project

You *can* be a leader!
Here are a few tips from
other young people with
disabilities on how to de-
velop and strengthen
your leadership qualities:



Believe that you can accomplish anything and set goals for yourself. Here is one way that you can set goals for yourself:



Think about the things you want to achieve. For example, is there something new you want to learn or a Class you want to take? Is there a Club you want to join or a job you want to learn more about?

Write down those goals and/or have someone help you write them down.

Choose one of those goals, and think about the steps or things that will help you achieve your goal. Talk to a friend or teacher about the steps you might need to take.

Write down the steps that will help you reach your goal.

And check off each step as you complete it!

Things *you* can do to be a leader!

Ask your teachers for ways you can volunteer and be a leader.

Share your own experiences with younger students who have a disability.

You can encourage them to become leaders and increase your leadership skill by sharing what you have learned.

Join after-school clubs and activities to discover your interests and become more confident. Offer your own ideas about things you and your friends can do!

Are there school leadership activities you might want to join – for example, your School Council? Is there a club that you like so much that you would consider running to be an officer of that club? These could be important goals for yourself!

Does your school have a club that does things to help people in your community – perhaps people who are homeless, or older persons who may need help doing things. Could you join that club? That is a great

way to make friends, and do something important for your community as well! And it is a great example of leadership!

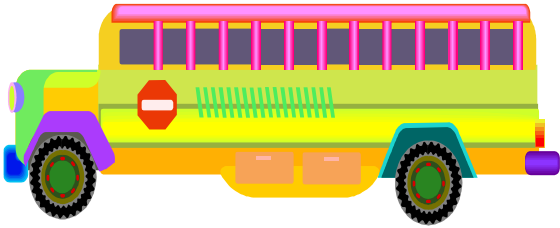
Take challenging classes in school. Do you like science or social studies? Would you like to learn Spanish or another language? Don't limit yourself! Ask for the accommodations you need to participate.

Accommodations can be a lot of different things that help you learn. For example, if

you need help taking notes, sitting closer to the front of the classroom so you can see or hear better, or using your communication system to answer questions about the book your class is reading, these are all examples of accommodations to help you learn.



Do presentations in your class. If you use a communication system, show others what you can do with your communication system!



Become active in a local disability group or other community group. You can practice public speaking and make friends with other leaders.

Don't be afraid to speak up. Make sure people know what accommodations you need and what you can do completely on your own. Never be afraid to ask for help.

Attend *and lead* your IEP meetings. You can make introductions, tell the people at your meeting what you are good at, what you want to learn next, and the goals you have for your future. Most importantly you will be advocating for yourself!

Find out what to expect when you start a new activity. If you are taking a new class, obtain a class outline (syllabus) so you can better prepare for what is ahead. Ask the teacher what you must do for the class. Always try to be prepared

Become part of a peer network. This group can help you get more involved in school organizations and increase your confidence when making new friends. Ask your teacher about how to get involved.

Be a friend to *yourself*. Think about what you are good at, and share those things with others—show people what you really can do!



Activity 1: Think about something you really want to do – something that is important to you. Write down your goal (what you hope to achieve) – it is OK to have someone help you with this:

Talk with a peer about how you can accomplish your goal. Write down the steps (the things you need to do) that will help you reach your goal.

Then, as you *complete* each step, mark it down! You did it!

Keep others informed of your progress, share your progress with your family and friends.

If you have difficulty doing any of the steps to your goal, talk with your friends, teachers, or parents about it.

Think about what you can do to overcome that difficulty, and add that new step to your plan.

And let everyone know when you have achieved your goal!

Here is a good resource to help you do your planning.

Kentucky Youth Advocacy Project (www.kyap.org) - [My Goal Book](#)

One of your teachers or friends might really be interested in helping you complete your own Goal Book.



Activity 2: Share your interests and skills with a friend or group of peers. Part of being a leader is effectively communicating and using your individual talents to reach a goal. Talk about what you like and what you are good at! It can be as simple as being easy a good listener or as complex as building model cars or planes, or working on computers. Put those skills to use with an after-school group or your peer support network!



Want to Learn More about Leadership or Connect with Other Leaders?

Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered: <http://www.sabeusa.org>

Kids as Self Advocates: <http://www.fvkasa.org>

I'm Determined: <http://www.imdetermined.org>

Youth Leadership Forum: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/programs/ylf.htm>

Association of Youth Leadership Forums: <http://www.aylf.net/index.html>

The National Youth Leadership Network: <http://www.nyln.org>

The National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth: <http://www.nclcd-youth.info>

Youthhood: <http://www.youthhood.org>

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