



# Building Independence in Students with Disabilities

## Keys to Independence

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Fostering independence in your child is essential for success. These six key components work together to create a sense of independence in children.

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### Create a Team

- ↔ Share your child's strengths and needs
- ↔ Be a partner and build relationships
- ↔ Plan for ongoing communication

### Create a Workspace

- ↔ Customize a space to work in
- ↔ Have flexible options
- ↔ Organize work materials

### Set Goals

- ↔ Break big goals into smaller tasks
- ↔ Use a visual checklist
- ↔ Reflect on progress regularly

### Establish a Schedule

- ↔ Create and use routines
- ↔ Use a visual schedule
- ↔ Use a timer to stay on track

### Allow for Breaks

- ↔ Create a break schedule
- ↔ Identify preferred activities
- ↔ Use a timer

### Limit Distractions

- ↔ Protect the workspace
- ↔ Turn off other devices
- ↔ Consider using headphones

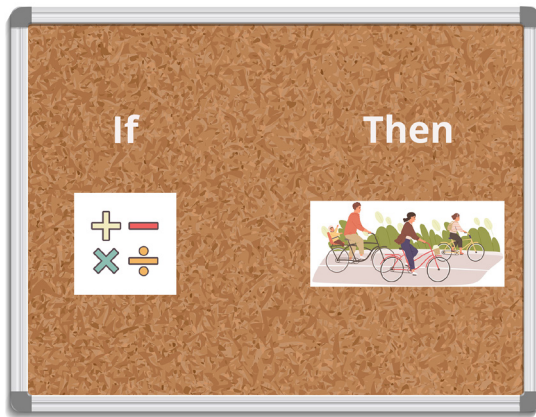
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## Meeting Student Needs

Teach the key components tailored to your child's needs. Empower them with choice and autonomy to boost independence and generalization. Encourage self-regulation so they can assess their progress and seek help when needed. Use tools like conversations, visual prompts, or color-coded frames to support self-regulation across various assignments.

## Meeting the Needs of Students with More Complex Disabilities

Reward systems help students with complex disabilities develop self-regulation. Use pictures of preferred activities to mark progress. Visual schedules provide clear instructions for current and upcoming activities. Here is an example:



The If/Then Strategy can be used for rewards and progress tracking. For example, "If I finish my math problems, then I can go outside to play."

## Building Independence Through Challenging Behavior

How we respond to challenging behavior can influence both the current and future work sessions. The Calm, Reflect, Re-Connect strategy helps recognize challenging behavior and maintain focus.

### Calm

- Drink/snack
- Connect with a friend
- Deep breathing
- Ask for help



### Reflect

- Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings
- Acknowledge how you think your child is feeling
- Think about what is needed to prevent your child from engaging in the problem behavior

### Re-Connect

- Acknowledge each other's feelings
- Offer choices on how to move forward
- Redirect to a new activity
- Talk and/or play with your child

Scan the QR code to see FIN's other family resources about best practices for including students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

To find out how to contact your FIN Facilitator call 1-888-232-0421 or visit the [FIN Website](#).

