

The Role of the Decision-Maker

The youth or adult with the disability is the most important person in the decision-making process. They have the right to make their own choices and lead the life they want. *They* are the decision-maker and their voice matters.

While they have the right to make their own decisions, they can also ask for help when needed. It is important for them to choose which decisions they want help with and who they want to support them.

Life Decisions Where Help Might Be Needed:

- Personal care
- Health choices
- School
- Job
- Friends
- Home
- Staying safe
- Partners/Dating
- Free time
- Money
- Self-advocacy
- Transportation
- Travel
- Legal matters
- Communication

They can choose the type of support they need and who will provide it. It is okay to use tools and resources that help them understand their options and be more independent. Since every person is different, this will look different for each person.

It is important to remember that while the youth or adult may need help understanding, communicating, and weighing their options, **they** will always make the final decision after getting the support they want and ask for.

What is Their Role as the Decision-Maker?

As the decision-maker, the person with the disability should aim to:

- Be ready to share information about what they need and want.
- Reach out to supporters when they need help.
- Keep supporters informed about how things are going.
- Check that supporters fully understand what they are saying.
- Speak up when there's a problem.
- Advocate for themselves by asking questions or seeking advice.

Over time a decision-maker works towards:

- Understands that important decisions need careful thought
- Knows what matters most to them
- Works together with a team of supporters
- Communicates in ways that work best for them and lets others know their preferred style
- Listens to the ideas and input of others
- Understands their own strengths and challenges
- Takes responsibility for their choices
- Is willing to put in the time and effort needed to make informed decisions
- Is open to learning and considering different possibilities