

# “I Can” and “I Did”— Self-Advocacy for Young Students With Developmental Disabilities

Jane O'Regan Kleinert | Elizabeth M. Harrison

Tracy L. Fisher | Harold L. Kleinert

*Self-advocacy and self-determination include the abilities to select personal goals, plan steps toward goals, assess one's progress, make choices, and self-monitor and self-evaluate one's behaviors (Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mit-haug, & Martin, 2000; Wehmeyer & Sands, 1998). These are important skills in both current and future environments (Hamm & Mirenda, 2006). Unfortunately, youth with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities often lack the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect them on a daily basis (Thoma, Rogan, & Baker, 2001). Even when opportunities for self-determined behaviors do arise, youth with significant disabilities often do not display these behaviors in the context of their school and everyday routines (Carter, Owens, Trainor, Sun, & Swedeen, 2009).*

*How can their self-advocacy skills be strengthened? What can teachers and administrators do to support this growth? This article describes the step-by-step procedures utilized by the Kentucky Youth Advocacy Project (KYAP) team to train both students with disabilities and school personnel to increase self-advocacy and self-determination—and to support these skills with the development of strong communication systems.*

## **Communication and Self-Determination: A Fundamental Relationship**

An essential element for nearly all of the component skills of self-determination is the student's ability to communicate. Expressing one's choices, making decisions, asserting oneself, and evaluating one's own behavior are all primary elements of self-advocacy—and they all require a mechanism for communication. There are only a few contributions to the self-determination literature from communication disorders specialists/speech-language pathologists (SLPs; Kleinert, 2007; Light & Gulens, 2000). Recent research indicates that students with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities—students who often have limited communication competence (Towles-Reeves, Kearns, Kleinert, & Kleinert, 2009)—also “[evidence] limited knowledge about self-determined behavior, ability to perform these behaviors, and confidence regarding the efficacy of their self-determination efforts” (Carter et al., 2009, p. 179). On the other hand, research has shown that individuals with disabilities who have strong self-determination/self-advocacy skills and those who can utilize augmentative communication systems to express

themselves (Hamm & Mirenda, 2006; Kleinert et al., 2002; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998) have better postschool outcomes and reported quality of life.

In light of the importance of communication skills for self-advocacy and self-determination, school-based SLPs



are valuable team members when initiating programs in this area. Light and Gulens (2000) noted that communication competence is necessary for an individual to become fully self-determined. Wilkinson (2006), in reviewing the responsibilities of SLPs who work with individuals with severe disabilities, noted that "the SLP's role is to maximize a child's ability to communicate his or her preferences. Consequently, the SLP may play a critical role in the effort to maximize each child's potential for self-determination" (p. 5). The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has issued multiple position papers and guidelines that define and support the SLP's role in delivering services to students regardless of their level of disability (ASHA, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c).

### **The Importance of Starting Early**

It is easy to see how important self-advocacy skills are for older students who will soon transition to an adult environment. However, current research and best practice also highlight the benefits of early self-advocacy training for younger children with disabilities as well. Young students in elementary and middle school, including those with autism and other developmental disabilities, increase their participation in academic work and decrease negative behaviors when they have opportunities for choice in the

Schloss, 1995). By beginning training in self-advocacy and self-determination at a young age, we give children with disabilities a head start on a potentially enhanced quality of life, improved postschool outcomes, and increased participation in their current academic programs.

### **The Kentucky Youth Advocacy Project Model**

Although self-determination and self-advocacy are clearly critical life skills for all students, teaching self-determination/self-advocacy to students with more significant disabilities and to students who lack functional communication skills can be problematic for teachers. Abilities such as voicing preferences, making choices, and selecting personal goals are integral skills for self-determination (Agran, King-Sears, Wehmeyer, & Copeland, 2003), yet are dependent on communication competence (Light & Gulens, 2000).

Given these challenges and the need to start self-determination and self-advocacy instruction as early as possible, the Kentucky Youth Advocacy Project (KYAP) was designed to teach students ages 7 to 18 to develop self-advocacy skills. This project model emphasizes the importance of providing students with adequate communication systems to more fully participate in their daily life decisions. By providing experience in self-advocacy at an early age, along with functional com-

teacher(s). KYAP has been used with over 200 students in 3 years; we've trained over 40 teachers, SLPs, administrators, other therapists, and parents in this student-friendly approach to self-advocacy. In addition, the KYAP model includes individuals from the community who have disabilities and who have been successful self-advocates as mentors for students with disabilities.

### **Background and Intent of the KYAP Model**

The KYAP approach is adapted from an evidence-based model for teaching students to identify, plan, and implement self-selected goals: the self-determined learning model of instruction (SDLMI; Agran, Blanchard, & Wehmeyer, 2000; Agran et al., 2003; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). The SDLMI has three primary phases, in which the student (a) selects a personal goal, (b) develops an action plan to achieve that goal and identifies potential barriers, and (c) self-evaluates progress and adjusts his or her plan or goal as needed. Problem solving, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation are key to the SDLMI. We chose the SDLMI model because it has a clear, sequential approach to teaching self-advocacy and self-determination skills, and has supportive effectiveness research (Agran et al., 2005; Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; Wehmeyer et al., 2000).

Although there is much research in self-advocacy and self-determination with middle school and high school students with adequate communication systems, and a few studies conducted with younger students (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003), most studies have primarily involved older students and most have been implemented by teachers. In contrast, KYAP was created to involve younger students and students who had significant cognitive and/or communication challenges, and was designed to include the full team (including SLPs). We subsequently adapted the SDLMI model (Agran et al., 2000; Wehmeyer et al., 2000) to fit our unique approach, and designed student-friendly materials that could

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academic setting (Jolivet, Stichter, & McCormick, 2002; Moes, 1998).

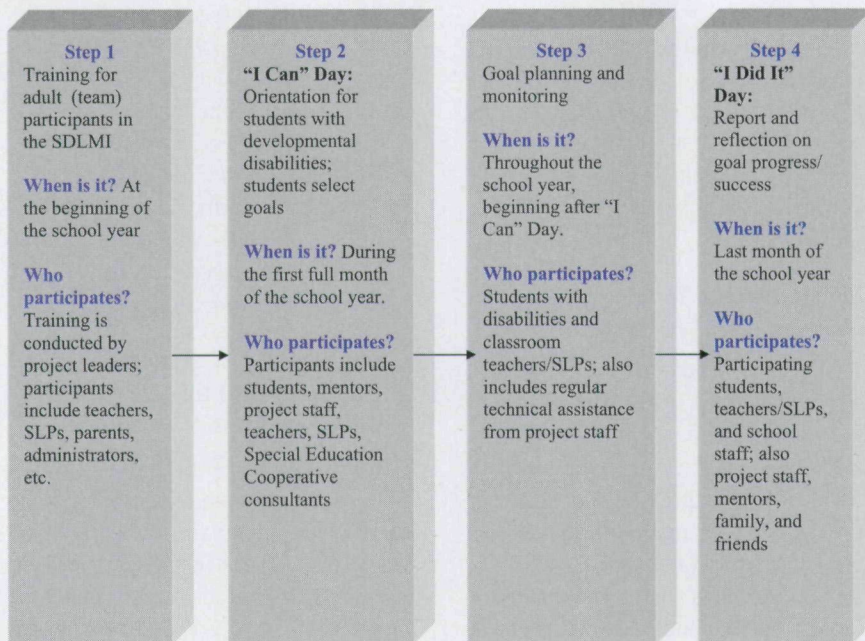
Children as young as kindergarten age have successfully utilized a self-determined learning model of instruction with teacher assistance (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003), and researchers offer a variety of techniques to develop self-advocacy skills with in elementary and middle schools (Alper, Schloss, &

communication skills, we hoped to increase the potential of students to participate more fully in all aspects of school and community life.

### **A Team Approach**

The KYAP model stresses the importance of involving a full team—including the SLP, in the self-advocacy program—in addition to the student's

**Figure 1. The Kentucky Youth Advocacy Project (KYAP) Model**



Note. SDLMI = self-determined learning model of instruction (Agran et al., 2000; Wehmeyer et al., 2000); SLPs = speech/language pathologists.

easily be adapted for students with varying cognitive and communication levels.

**Steps in the KYAP Model**

KYAP staff contacted school districts, associations for persons with developmental disabilities, residential settings, and home-schooled students to recruit participants in the KYAP program. Once participants were identified, we initiated the process illustrated in Figure 1. In Year 1, KYAP focused on underserved areas of the state, and in Years 2 and 3 expanded to other areas. Over 40 school personnel, parents, and therapists were trained in the model and over 200 students were involved over the 3-year period.

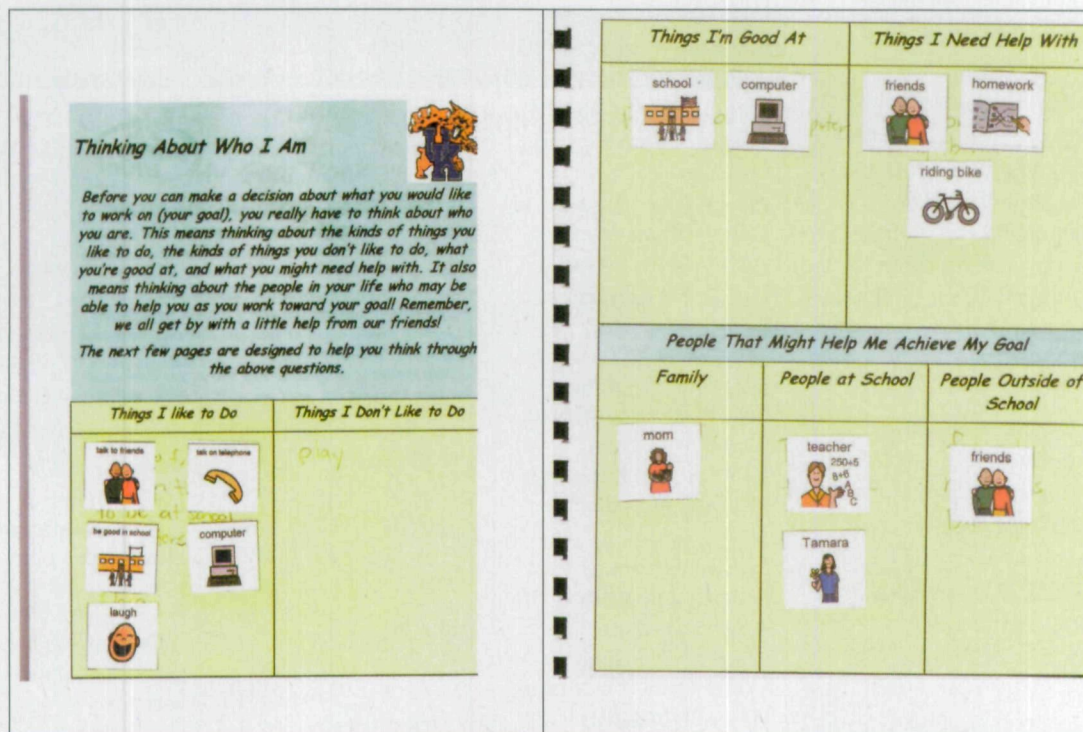
**Step 1: Orientation/Training**

The orientation/training was offered to adult participants interested in the KYAP program (i.e., teachers, SLPs,

**Figure 2. KYAP Web Site Home Page (www.kyap.org)**



**Figure 3. Sample Student Goal Book Pages, Phase One: Goal Selection**



paraeducators, administrators, and parents). Topics addressed included

- The importance of “self-determination” for individuals with disabilities, especially the importance of early self-advocacy experiences.
- The importance of communication skills to support self-advocacy.
- Training in the use of the SDLMI.

Each participant received a copy of *Student-Directed Learning: Teachers’ Guides to Inclusive Practices* (Agran et al., 2003).

The training included asking participants to think of students with disabilities who might want to participate in the KYAP program, including younger students and students with more severe disabilities. Participants received materials describing the approach and asking parental permission that they could use to recruit students. All of these materials, as well as resources, newsletters, and information on related events, are available from the KYAP web site ([www.kyap.org](http://www.kyap.org); see Figure 2).

### Step 2: “I Can” Day

The purpose of Step 2 is to introduce students to the concepts of choices,

goals, plans, and self-monitoring. We held large-group, day-long celebratory meetings for groups of students, teachers, SLPs, and parents from each participating school district. Students learned how to develop goals through colorful PowerPoint presentations, group discussions, and examples. An extremely important element of the “I Can” Day is the participation of mentors, persons with disabilities who are also successful self-advocates. The mentors spoke to the students and families about self-advocacy and answered student questions. Parents were particularly interested in talking with the mentors during lunch and breaks to learn about the mentors’ success in employment and self-advocacy.

During “I Can” Day, students worked in small groups with their teachers, SLPs, mentors, and KYAP staff in selecting a personal goal they wanted to achieve. Each student received a KYAP *My Goal Book* (Kleinert, Harrison, & Fleming, 2007) describing the three phases of the SDLMI; we developed two versions of the book, one for elementary-age students and one for older students (both goal books are available from the

KYAP web site, [www.kyap.org](http://www.kyap.org)). The goal books are written in student-friendly language, and include space for the students’ own photos and pages on which students record their interests, the names of the important people in their lives, lists of their favorite things and things they do not like or that are difficult for them, and a set of activities they would like to do or things they would like to learn to do. Students with milder disabilities could complete many of the pages on their own with minimal adult guidance. Younger students and students with more significant disabilities and/or those with limited communication competence worked with a familiar adult to complete the steps in the goal book. Figure 3 provides sample pages for a student who used augmentative/alternative communication with pictures and symbols.

By the end of “I Can” Day, participating students had selected a goal that they wanted to achieve and each student shared his or her personal goal. Table 1 provides examples of students’ goals. Goals reflected students’ interests and related to playing a sport or joining a team, learning to sing or play an instrument, doing better in

school, learning to use a communication system, losing weight, exercising, learning to dance, and so on. Older students tended to have goals that related to possible postschool employment or education or training, whereas younger children tended to be focused on learning a new skill or hobby, or a social activity such as having a birthday party at home or using a communication system to interact with others.

### Step 3: Goal Planning and Monitoring

During the next few months, students—with the assistance of their teachers/SLPs and sometimes parents—began to work on their personal goals. Following the steps in Phase Two in *My Goal Book* (Kleinert et al., 2007; see Figure 4), each student developed a plan to achieve his or her goal.

The SDLMI (Agran et al., 2000; Wehmeyer et al., 2000) not only guides the students through a planning process, but also encourages students to think about the barriers that might exist to achieving their goal and how they can manage these barriers. For example, one student who had severe cerebral palsy, used a motorized chair, and was nonverbal liked working with the school basketball team; he helped record statistics during games. The school provided transportation for him to “away” games, but had only a small bus that was accessible for him, so he did not ride with the team to the games. The student wanted very much to ride with the team. The assistant principal attended the student’s KYAP meeting and when he learned of the situation, he worked with the school and transportation providers to obtain a larger bus that was accessible for use in travel to away games. The transportation issue was a major barrier for this student. When he advocated for himself, by expressing his frustration at his KYAP meeting, the barrier was resolved for that school year.


Not all barriers can be so easily resolved. One advantage of the SDLMI (Agran et al., 2000; Wehmeyer et al., 2000) is that, in learning to identify barriers, students learn which goals are

**Table 1. Sample Student Goals**

Elementary School Students	Middle School Students	High School Students
<p>Work on buying something at the store on my own</p> <p>Have my birthday party at home with my friends coming to my house</p> <p>Use picture exchange at home and school</p> <p>Learn to let my teacher/parent know I need to go somewhere to calm down</p> <p>Learn to spell better as I get better at basketball</p> <p>Be able to look up information on the Internet pertaining to my new school</p> <p>Learn how to climb the monkey bars (I’m tired of being on the ground)</p>	<p>Learn how to dance</p> <p>Use a communication board to talk with people</p> <p>Learn to play guitar</p> <p>Work with the football team</p> <p>Make a purse</p> <p>Make eye contact with adults</p>	<p>Initiate conversations</p> <p>Find out if I can be a manager for the wrestling team and find out about a summer job</p> <p>Do my homework independently</p> <p>Go to the games on the same bus as the team</p> <p>Get a way to communicate</p> <p>Be a professional wrestler</p> <p>Lose 10 pounds</p> <p>Do something in nursing and/or working with the elderly after graduation; check out the 2-year nursing program at my community college</p> <p>Go on some kind of post-secondary education/training; check out what Carl Perkins Vocational Training Center has to offer via the Internet</p> <p>Get a job at Burger King</p> <p>Help at a beauty salon</p>

**Figure 4. KYAP’s My Goal Book, Phase Two: Goal Planning**

**PHASE TWO:  
MAKING A PLAN TO  
ACHIEVE MY GOAL**



*There are 4 Steps to Making up an Action Plan to reach your goal:*

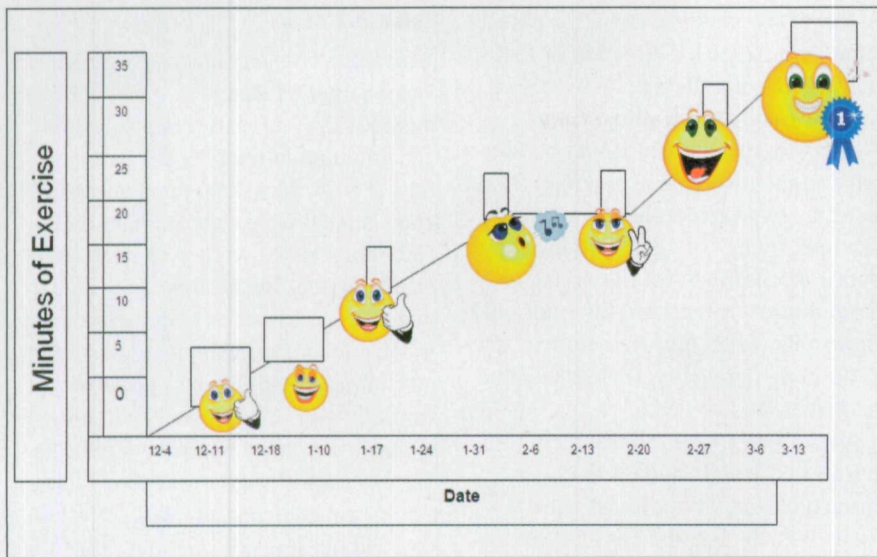
- 1) “Goal Actions” - Thinking about small steps you will do to reach your goal
- 2) “Barrier” - Thinking about what could keep you from taking action (fill these in from page 8)
- 3) “Barrier Action” - Thinking about how to REMOVE the barriers you’ve identified
- 4) “When” - Figuring out when you will begin each step of the plan

1) Goal Actions	2) Barriers	3) Barrier Actions	4) When

*(more space on next page.)*

Note. Reprinted with permission from *My Goal Book*, by J. Kleinert, E. Harrison, and B. Fleming, 2007. Copyright 2007 by the Kentucky Youth Advocacy Project.

**Figure 5. Student Self-Monitoring Graph: Exercise Plan**



reasonable and which goals may have to be modified. For example, one student with a cognitive disability wanted to become a professional wrestler (on television). This was not a goal that was achievable during that school year. It was necessary to help the student recognize that this goal would need to be revised. The student was encouraged to think about other ways he could participate in wrestling. There was a wrestling team at his school and

he talked to the coach about helping the team. The student's teacher and coach encouraged him to join the team, which he did. Recognizing and figuring out how to overcome barriers, and learning how to develop realistic goals, are important steps in self-advocacy.

Students with more significant intellectual disabilities, and those with limited communication skills, had more difficulty identifying personal goals.

**Figure 6. Student Self-Monitoring Graph: Getting Healthy!**

Date	I ate food that was good for me at lunch	I walked to exercise today	I completed my food diary	I did not gain any weight this week	I lost weight this week
11-13 Monday	☺	☺	☺		
11-14 Tuesday	☺	☺	✗		
11-15 Wednesday	✗	☺	☺		
11-16 Thursday	☺	✗	☺		
11-17 Friday	☺	✗	✗	☺	☺
11-20 Monday					

Initially, teachers did not refer such students to the KYAP program. The KYAP staff actively sought such students when we met them in classrooms, and encouraged teachers and SLPs to include such students in the project. Teachers often selected goals such as "making choices," and "interacting with others" for such students. When we worked with the school staff and helped them see that a significant barrier to these goals was the fact that the student did not have a functional communication in place, the school personnel realized the importance of providing augmentative communication for the students. (See box, "KYAP Case Studies")

In the first 2 years, we visited participating schools to provide assistance. Because these schools were geographically dispersed, the visits were not as frequent as we would have liked. In Year 3, we provided each participating classroom a computer-linked camera and we began to "visit" classes regularly via SKYPE (a free computer software application that allows users to see each other during conversations on the Internet). The students and teachers loved this option, and it allowed us to work directly with students on a more frequent basis.

Besides developing a plan of action and identifying barriers, the SDLMI emphasizes maintaining ongoing monitoring of progress toward goals (Agran et al., 2000; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). The students' goal books provided space for self-monitoring or data collection. Teachers assisted students in keeping regular data on their progress to determine if the goal was achievable or if it needed to be modified. Due to teachers' and SLPs' busy schedules, this was the most difficult task to complete consistently. Teachers/SLPs had several options for data collection, with the emphasis on the student monitoring him/herself as much as possible. Figures 5, 6, and 7 are sample data sheets and models for data collection that could be adapted for students with cognitive challenges; there are additional samples in *My Goal Book* (Kleinert et al., 2007; available from [www.kyap.org](http://www.kyap.org)).

## KYAP Case Studies

Working with students with significant disabilities and with young students presents multiple challenges. Including parents and essential school staff is necessary to support students to learn to be self-advocates and to become more self-determined. Steps toward success may be smaller or slower for these students, but if they are to progress they must be offered the opportunity to systematically develop and practice the component skills of self-determination.

### Sandy

One student in the KYAP SDLMI project, Sandy, was 19 years old. She had multiple disabilities and a severe intellectual disability. She often cried, bit herself, hit her tray on her wheelchair, or fell asleep at school. She had cortical blindness, did not walk, and had no clear communication system other than the behaviors described. Initially her teacher did not consider her for participation in the KYAP project. We felt strongly, however, that all students should be included in our project. Students with severe disabilities rarely are offered the chance to assert themselves or indicate their preferences. We were determined to include Sandy in the project in an effort to improve her quality of life by providing her with opportunities to express herself and her wants. Students who have disabilities can participate in self-determination/self-advocacy activities at a variety of levels, some more independently than others; the KYAP project was designed to include students at all levels.

In order to include Sandy in KYAP the project staff worked with the teacher and Sandy's mother to identify beneficial goals for Sandy. Her mother and teacher hoped Sandy could become a more active participant in her school program, would stay awake, and stop biting herself. KYAP staff helped the teacher and parent identify Sandy's preferences, and assisted her in learning to express these so that she would be less likely to bite herself or cry. The personal goal developed for Sandy was that she would interact more with other people in her environment. We decided to use Sandy's favorite activities when teach-

ing her to use a simple switch to communicate a desire for attention or the continuation of a pleasant activity. For example, Sandy loved going fast in her wheelchair. This activity would be initiated and then stopped. Sandy had a single message switch on her tray that asked for "more" or "go." Initially she needed assistance to hit the switch to communicate with others, but after only a few trials, when her chair stopped she sat up more frequently, smiled, touched her switch, and waited to go.


After a few weeks the teacher noticed that when Sandy was bored during a class activity that did not readily include her, she began to hit her message switch. She had learned to interact with others and even become a self-advocate by indicating "Hey, what about me?" Such new behaviors were a clear reflection of the importance allowing Sandy to voice her preference, increase her self-expression, and become a self-advocate.

### Tyler and Mike

Working with elementary-age students was another challenge to the KYAP staff and required innovative strategies; this age group often requires the participation of both the school team and parents. Parents were eager to help their children begin to work on a goal, especially one that might increase their participation at school or help them make friends. Two participating students with autism presented different goals with a similar theme. Tyler (age 6) had difficulty staying in the classroom without having outbursts; his goal was to be able stay in his kindergarten class for a full day without a major outburst. Mike (age 8) had never been able to have a birthday party at home because of his outbursts and behaviors in new situations; his goal was to be able to have a birthday party at home that year.

For both of these students, these were truly goals with many barriers that required several months to accomplish,

**Figure A. Salena's Goal Journey**

<i>Salena's Use of the SDLMI and the KYAP Adaptions to Learn to Dance!</i>	
<i>Student Problem to Solve: Learning to Dance!</i>	
<p><i>1) Determining a Goal: Student Questions and Salena's Responses</i></p> <p>What do I want to learn? <i>To dance</i></p> <p>What do I know about it now? <i>"never dance"</i></p> <p>What must change for me to learn what I don't know? <i>How to dance, take lessons</i></p> <p>What can I do to make this happen? <i>Talk to my mom, Talk to my dad, find out about lessons</i></p>	<p><i>2) Developing My Plan to Achieve the Goal: Student Questions and Salena's Responses</i></p> <p>What can I do to learn what I don't know? <i>Find out about dance lessons</i></p> <p>What could keep me from taking action? <i>I am afraid to ask my dad, He might say "no," money too, Will my dad let me, I just can't.</i></p> <p>What can I do to remove these barriers? <i>Have my speech therapist help me ask, talk to my mom and dad, find out how much things cost, just think about it.</i></p> <p>When will I take action? <i>When I get back to school</i></p>
<p><i>3) My Plan of Action to Address Barriers: And Results</i></p> <p>Talk to Dad <i>Dad says fine!</i></p> <p>Talk to the dance teacher <i>She donated the lessons!</i></p> <p>Get my dance clothes and costume <i>Made an application to KYAP—I got it!</i></p> <p>Start dance class <i>I'm a little scared!</i></p>	

and parental support was essential to their success. With coordinated efforts between home, school, and consultation from the KYAP staff, both boys were able to begin to monitor their own behaviors and identify when their behaviors were disruptive. By the end of the year, Tyler was able to stay in his class for a full day and Mike had his first birthday party at home.

### Salena

Salena, a middle school student, wanted to learn to dance (see Figure A); her SLP helped her locate a dance class. However, Salena was worried that her parents might not let her go to the class because of her medical issues; she also did not know if her family could afford the lessons or the dance costume—both of these were identified as potential barriers. Her SLP helped her write a simple script to talk to her dad about taking lessons. He was happy for her to go to the les-

sons, but cost was a potential barrier. Selena and her SLP met with the dance teacher; when she learned about the KYAP program, she donated the cost of the lessons. Salena still needed to purchase the costume for the dance class. KYAP had a small “scholarship” fund for such contingencies. In order to access these funds, Salena was required to find out, list, and add up the cost of the costume (reinforcing her math skills); write a request to KYAP (reinforcing her literacy skills); and promise to present her success at the “I Did It” Day (which simultaneously addressed her shyness difficulty; see Figure B).

At “I Did It” Day, Salena proudly showed a video of herself in dance class and modeled her lovely costume for her upcoming recital. She presented all this in front of a roomful of people. Her mother noted that “Salena is a different person now!”

**Figure B. Salena’s Application for the Dance Costume**

**Scholarship Application for Activities on  
Kentucky Youth Advocacy Project**

Name: Salena Date: 12-19-06

School: AMG

1. Are you participating in the KYAP program?  YES or NO

2. What is the name of your teacher or speech pathologist who is working with you  
LEANN

3. Did you attend the KYAP I CAN DAY in Hazard, KY on 12-8-06?  YES OR NO

4. What goal have you picked for yourself?  
to learn to dance

5. Please list the items you need to help you complete your KYAP goal.

What I will need	Where I will purchase this	What will it cost
<u>dance outfit</u>	<u>dance snippe</u>	<u>476.00</u>
<u>recital</u>	<u>dance snippe</u>	<u>50.00</u>
<u>dance shoes</u>	<u>dance snippe</u>	<u>40.00</u>
<u>Dance class</u>	<u>Donated by instructor</u>	<u>245.00</u>
		Approximate total needed: <u>\$150.00</u>

On another piece of paper, please write a short letter about your goal. Please tell us:

1. What is your goal
2. Why did you pick this goal?
3. Where will you do this?
4. Who will help you?
5. How will you show what you have learned?
6. Did you like coming to the KYAP I CAN DAY?

Please send this application and your letter to:

In Year 3, we began to use SKYPE to meet with students on a monthly basis to update and monitor their progress. Students were encouraged to remind teachers/SLPs that it was time to meet with the KYAP staff and

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update data. Overall, students and teachers/SLPs were very satisfied with this approach, as it eased the responsibility on the teachers/SLPs and shifted it to the students. Even students with significant disabilities enjoyed the “SKYPE visits”; the visits also provided teachers with a scheduled time to update student data.

### Step 4: “I Did It” Day

At the end of the school year, students again participated in a celebratory day; this time, it was an opportunity to share their accomplishments and reflect on their goal planning and progress. We held an “I Did It” Day for each school or classroom participating in the KYAP program; each student presented his or her goal, explained the steps to the goal, and described his or her success. Parents and families were invited to attend; several principals, special education directors, and a school superintendent also attended.

Prior to the program, we gave participating students a simple script that they could use to organize their presentations (see Figure 8), as well as offered suggestions for different ways to present their goal reports (e.g., PowerPoint presentations and poster boards). Students and teachers were often much more creative than the templates we provided. One middle-school group of students had wanted to learn to play the guitar. They developed a weekly class with the assistance of their teacher and performed together at “I Did It” Day. One set of high



**Figure 7. Electronic Data Sheet Used by Teacher to Track Student's Progress on the SDLMI**

Student: AB. Date: "I CAN" DAY 11/2/07													
Goal: Have a Birthday Party At My House	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Insert Date	11/09/07	12/15	01/12/08	1/19	1/26	02/08	2/1	3/01	3/16	4/10			
<b>SDLMI PHASE 1</b>													
#1: What do I want to learn? This is my goal	✓												
#2: What do I know about this goal now? What can I already do?	✓												
#3: What must I change for me to learn what I don't know?		✓											
#4: What can I do to make this goal happen? Do I need a plan?		✓											
<b>SDLMI PHASE 2</b>													
#1: Beginning a Plan (What can I do to learn what I don't know?)			✓										
#2: Identify Barriers (What could stop me from taking action?)				✓									
#3: My Plan (What can I do to remove these barriers?)					✓								
#4: Time Table (When will I take action?)						✓							
<b>SDLMI PHASE 3</b>													
#1: I have Begun My Plan (What actions have I taken?)							✓						
#2: Assess My Progress (What barriers have been removed?)								✓					
#3: Do I need to revise? (What has changed about what I don't know?)									✓				
#4: I have Reached My Goal (Do I know what I want to know?)										✓			

Note. SDLMI = self-determined learning model of instruction (Wehmeyer et al., 2000).

**Figure 8. Sample Student Script for "I Did It" Day**

Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the \_\_\_\_\_ grade.

Some of the things I really like to do are:

\_\_\_\_\_

Some things I don't like to do are:

\_\_\_\_\_

The goal I chose was:

\_\_\_\_\_

I started working on the goal on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

My action plan included:

\_\_\_\_\_

The actions I have taken so far are:

\_\_\_\_\_

The easiest part of working toward my goal has been:

\_\_\_\_\_

The hardest part of working toward my goal has been:

\_\_\_\_\_

I have learned this about my goal:

\_\_\_\_\_

school students had severe disabilities and were nonverbal. With their teacher's help, they presented their individually developed goals via a PowerPoint and video, showing them using their communication systems and adaptive equipment to participate more in school. Two elementary school students demonstrated their karate skills, and Mike, a student with autism, showed pictures of his birthday party. One high school student presented a PowerPoint of his new job working in an assistive living facility with older adults. His employer even came and presented with him.

Each student received a plaque at the end of the "I Did It" Day indicating that he or she was a successful "Self-Advocate." Participating teachers received materials to help them continue the process the following year. The results of a satisfaction survey distributed at the end of each "I Did It" Day indicated that all participants were very excited and satisfied with their KYAP experience.

### **We All Can Do It!**

The success of the KYAP model demonstrates that self-advocacy training can be broadened and offered to younger students, large groups of students, and students with the most significant disabilities. KYAP materials adapted the highly successful SDLMI (Agran et al., 2000; Wehmeyer et al., 2000) so that in many cases students could complete much of the process with minimal adult supervision, and students with significant disabilities and those who had not been provided a functional communication system could participate with adaptations of the student-friendly KYAP materials and the support of family and school staff.

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- Jane O'Regan Kleinert**, Assistant Professor, Division of Communication Sciences and Disorders, College of Health Sciences; and
- Elizabeth M. Harrison**, Human Development Institute, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, University of Kentucky, Lexington. **Tracy L. Fisher**, NCSPP School Psychologist II/Educational Specialist, Georgetown, South Carolina. **Harold L. Kleinert** (Kentucky CEC), Professor, College of Health Sciences and Executive Director of the Human Development Institute, University of Kentucky, Lexington.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jane O'Regan Kleinert, 124 N Charles T. Wethington Bldg., 900 S. Limestone St., University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40536-0200 (e-mail: jklei2@uky.edu).

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