



How can my expectations help my child with a disability?

A parent's expectations for their child with a disability can motivate them and lead to more success. This tip sheet will cover ways positive expectations can help your child.

Look at assets, not deficits

Focusing on what your child cannot do sets you up to see them through a deficit-based lens and focus on their limitations. Instead, look at the possibilities of what they can do. What might they be able to achieve given the opportunity, support, and training?



Communicating your hopes

Discuss your hopes and dreams for your child with them **early** and **regularly**. These conversations let them know that their future is important to you and builds their confidence.

Strategies to communicate this include:

- Talking about or listening to your child's thoughts for the future
- Sharing your hopes for their life as an adult
- Sharing your belief in their abilities
- Sharing what you see as their strengths and makes them special

These steps can be personalized to your child based on their needs, abilities, and your family's values.

Connect today's actions to future goals

Help them understand that what they do today connects them to their future goals. Talk to them about how their schoolwork, classes, or other activities help them learn skills for the future. Look for activities that will allow them to practice and acquire needed skills.

For example, if your child's dream is to work at an animal shelter, they will need to learn work skills, like following instructions and asking for help. They may also want to volunteer, so they can practice needed skills.

Building the bridge: *practical steps*

Here are ways to help your child build the bridge to their future:

- Connecting school classes to their personal interests or career goals
- Sharing your own personal successes and challenges with meeting goals
- Providing a time and place to practice skills
- Telling them you believe they can learn and praising their progress



If you have more questions about communicating high expectations, call PACER at (952) 838-9000 and ask to speak with an advocate or visit pacer.org.