

People First

Comprised of people with developmental disabilities who are self-advocates or who wish to learn self-advocacy, [People First](#) is an international organization that is involved in a wide variety of activities. The following information comes from the People First of Missouri website and provides a clear declaration of their motto: “Nothing about us without us!”

Who we are:

People First is a self-advocacy and self help organization formed by, run by and which exists for persons with developmental disabilities.

The members of People First are educating members in their schools, work places, homes and communities on how a person with a developmental disability has the right to live, work and play as every human being does.

Missouri People First are training other persons with disabilities about their rights and the responsibilities that will accompany those rights. Members are taught to speak up about their interests, talents, strengths and desires.

What we do:

- Plan and Present at state, national, and international conferences.
- Hold classes and give trainings to Self-advocates.
- Train Self-advocates to serve on boards and to represent other individuals.
- Work to develop training materials.
- Raise funds through sales and grants in order to become a self-sustaining organization.
- Learn about our "Rights" and responsibilities that come along with them.
- Learn more about becoming Self-determined.
- Teach others how to become Self-determined.
- Learn how to speak up for ourselves.
- Making our own decisions about what we want to do with our lives.
- Learning how to get all the information that we need to understand a topic.
- Finding out what and who will support us in meeting our goals.
- Knowing our rights and responsibilities.
- Feeling good about learning from our mistakes.
- Problem solving when things go wrong.
- Listening to and helping each other.
- Reaching out to people who are not members.
- Learning about Self-determination.

Why is Self-Advocacy Important:

In the past and sometimes even today, adults treat persons with disabilities like we are children. Sometimes we are not given the chance to participate in decisions that are being made about our lives.

Often people who we think are helping us are hiding our rights from us. We are often labeled and called by our label instead of our name. Many of us have not been given the chance how to live in the community.

People First has allowed us to speak up for ourselves and to show others that we do have the right to make choices.