Since self-advocacy is an important skill for high schoolers and adults with developmental disabilities, it is imperative that teachers, case managers and service providers are equipped with best practices to teach self-advocacy skills to high schoolers and adults with developmental disabilities. Our purpose is to explore the types of effective interventions and outcome measures related to self-advocacy that have been researched with teenagers and adults with developmental disabilities. The main question guiding this systematic review is as follows: for high schoolers and adults with developmental disabilities, what instructional methods for self-advocacy skills have been used to promote accuracy, frequency, generalization, and/or maintenance of self-advocacy skills? A secondary question of this systematic review was what types of outcome measures have been used to measure self-advocacy skills for high schoolers and adults with developmental disabilities?

Twelve studies were included in the review and were compared based on their design, What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) methodological quality, types of instructional methods and self-advocacy outcomes.

Several methods of effective self-advocacy instruction and outcomes were identified. The most common outcomes were knowledge of self-efficacy, participation in meetings, and role-play. The most common types of instructional methods were group discussions, role-play and videos. However, only one of the included studies met the WWC standards without reservation, and only one met the WWC with reservations.

This study only included published studies in the English language.

When teaching self-advocacy, the review found many types of instructional methods and curriculum are available. Due to the limited number of studies included in the review, future research is needed.