

○4) Contact the admissions office of several colleges even if the college is not a likely choice. Ask the college staff for information that describes the admissions process for students with disabilities, how students must document their disability, and what services that the college offers to students with disabilities. At this stage you and your child want to compare what is offered and colleges' requirements.

○5) Ensure that your child will have the necessary recent testing that a college needs to document a disability. This testing can be done during the senior year of high school but schedule it early. Have these reports and copies of your child's IEP and transition plan available for college staff.

○6) Have your child referred to vocational rehabilitation services to determine if he or she meets the rehabilitation services' disability guidelines. Rehabilitation services can help with financial and equipment support for students with disabilities.

○7) Contact social security administration and see if your child meets their guidelines for disability.

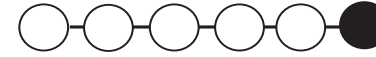
○8) If your child's college requires entrance test results such as the ACT or SAT, learn the process for requesting testing accommodations. If your child needs testing accommodations, the need must be documented which can be supported by school staff and reports.

○9) Ensure that your child learns to use appropriate accommodations in areas which may be challenging in college such as test taking, note-taking, registration, writing information, reading texts, working in groups, meeting deadlines, staying organized, using interpreters, and using computer software for speech recognition or reading text.

○10) Visit a few colleges. Talk to college staff about their success for students with disabilities. Ask to meet students with disabilities similar to your child.

○11) Remember your child has the responsibility to notify the college that she or he has a disability and needs services. The college has the responsibility to provide appropriate accommodations so that all students have a fair opportunity for access and success.

A Parent's Guide to College



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A Parent's Guide to College

A short guide to help you
understand the transition
process from high school
to college for your child
with a disability



This is number 6 in a 6-part
series

About College

College life poses different challenges for students with disabilities. When students enroll in college, they are considered responsible adults by faculty and staff. The expectations are that they will assume responsibilities for meeting their class requirements.

This added responsibility is coupled with a change in environment. Whereas the high school was a very structured environment with a set schedule, college schedules can vary dramatically. For the first time many students may have considerable time between classes and frequently do not use this time wisely. Students must enforce their own attendance policies and prepare to realize personal consequences if they choose not to attend class.

Is my child ready to assume these responsibilities?

If not, how will she/he learn these responsibilities?

Self-Advocacy

Another student responsibility is that of self-advocate. Students must become adept at realistically assessing and understanding their strengths, weaknesses, needs, and preferences. Also, they must become experts at communicating this information to other adults including instructors and service providers. Although services will be available to them through an office specializing in services for students with disabilities, often called the Disability Support Services (DSS) office, students will be responsible for seeking these services and supports. Good communication skills and knowledge about oneself become crucial to success in college.

How well does my child describe disability information?

How well does my child self-advocate?

High school and college are very different. Consider the differences, listed in the next column, and their importance to your child.

Comparison of Services.

High School

- Services are delivered to the student
- Services are based on an agreed upon time allotment and menu of choices
- Case manager acts as advocate
- Annual review & IEP
- Regular parent contact
- Entitlement law (IDEA)
- Educational and Psychological testing is provided

College

- Student must seek out services
- Services are based on situational/ individual needs
- Student acts as advocate
- No annual review or IEP
- No parent contact
- Anti-discrimination law (ADA)

Preparing for successful college experience begins early in school. Nationally, only about 9% of students with disabilities pursue a postsecondary education and of those only a small percentage graduate. If your child is going to beat these statistics, you have to plan and support the decisions that lead to college success.

Help Plan for College

(check items off as completed)

1) You must plant that idea that college is important, that you expect your child to go to college, and that you will help your child prepare. These messages need to be shared repeatedly with your child and shared through a number of different activities.

2) Preparation for college needs to start early in your child's high school years. At an IEP meeting ask the high school staff for their suggestion of which postsecondary option (e.g., technical school, community college, 4-year college or university) would be best for your child.

3) Work with your child's high school teachers and support staff including the counselor, school psychologist, vocational and career counselor, transition coordinator, and vocational rehabilitation counselor. At an IEP meeting ask about transition activities that would prepare your child for college.