

Planning for the Transition to 2 & 4-Year Colleges



Welcome!

Presenter:

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Agenda

- Preparing for changes at the college level
- Main points about different college processes
- Tips-once at college
- Ideas for transition activities that can help students prepare
- Share a few helpful resources



Planning for the Future



- **All students** are likely to face **some challenges** as they begin their college experience
- Students with disabilities will need the same skills as any other college freshman plus the **ability to compensate** for their disability
- Research widely recognizes that **readiness** for college **extends beyond academic skills** and achievements
- Some students may not have **adequate skill development to independently manage all aspects** of a college setting
- **Unrealistic expectations** of the types of **services** in college and being **uninformed** about the **process to access** accommodations, can leave students and parents surprised and unprepared

So...what are some things you should know?

What's Different in College?

- No more protections under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). **No special education services, No IEP/504 Plan, No automatic rights**
- College students are protected by **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** which are **civil rights laws** that ensure **the same access** to activities, materials and services **that all students have**. Prohibits discrimination based on disability
- Colleges are **not required to** fundamentally alter/modify curriculum, tests, assignments or **provide** services of personal nature (1:1 aides)
- Colleges have **no legal responsibility to identify students with disabilities** or involve parents in decision-making. Students must **sign a waiver** to give access to specific information
(FERPA - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
- If students are **not making satisfactory progress** they may become **ineligible for financial aid** and may eventually be dismissed from the college

Students should know what their **civil rights** are under the law, so they may effectively advocate for themselves



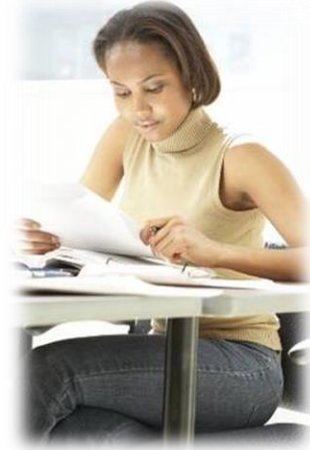
Admission to College

- A Regents/Local/or High School Equivalency (HSE) **diploma is required** for admission to NYS four year colleges/universities and most community colleges (as a matriculated student)
- Each college has the right to determine its **own admissions policies**
- Students must meet the same **admission criteria, academic & technical standards** required for participation in a class, program or activity; and **code of conduct** required of all students (they must be “**Otherwise Qualified**” despite their disability)

Consider taking any remedial courses before enrolling as a full-time student. Realize summer courses are condensed due to shorter timeframe.

Remedial Coursework (below college level)

- Is not calculated in the grade point average(GPA) requirement
- Credits do not count toward graduation requirements
- Can impose a financial and time burden



TIP



Foreign Language Requirement

- Students with learning disabilities have difficulty acquiring basic skills or academic content due to difficulty **using or understanding spoken or written language**
- Committees on Special Education often **exempt** students with disabilities from the foreign language requirement which can have a long-lasting effect
- Colleges can determine if a foreign language is an **essential component** of a plan of study, and if so, that component need not be altered, waived or substituted
- Disability **documentation** will be needed to support a **request** for a substitution



Students: Consider attempting World Language classes in middle/high school. If unable to pass, it **may** be considered partial documentation(a history) that supports the request for a college course substitution(i.e. American Sign Language).

Schools: Consider documenting data-based rationale(of a substantial language-based learning disability) for foreign language exemption decisions, separate from the IEP.

Class Schedules

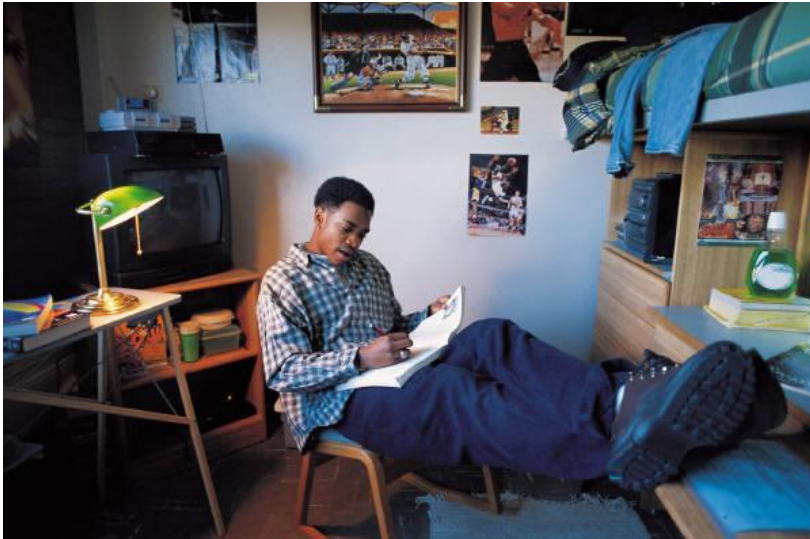


- Realize **academic advisors** will likely be **unaware** of a student's possible **need for accommodations**. Students should consider their needs for:
 - Extended time on tests
 - Amount of free time between classes
 - Attention span/length of class (3 hrs., 1.5 hrs., 1 hr.)
 - Time of day (transportation needed, effects of medication)
 - Difficulty/type of course (mix it up)
- **On-line courses** require strong self-direction; self discipline; and time management skills

Students can seek feedback from Disability Services Office prior to or after registration. Ask about teaching styles of instructors to ensure a good match with the student's learning style(if possible). Schedules can be changed if done early enough.



Student Question:
**How many hours per week do you currently study
for one high school class?**



- 3 hours
- 2 hours
- 1 hour
- 0 hours - I don't study

TIP

In college, students will generally need to study/work on assignments at least **6 hours per week** for each class (x 4 classes = **24hrs/per week**)

Student Coursework



- Students must **make arrangements outside of class-time**, to seek help from instructors
- Instructors expect students to consult the **course syllabus** throughout the course, know exactly **what is expected, due dates**, and how assignments will be **graded**
- Each instructor has their own **attendance policy**
- Education comes from a wide variety of sources, some of which **may be inaccessible** to a student with a disability
 - Lectures
 - Writing assignments
 - Read, Study, Research
 - Working with others, Labs, Projects
 - Class Discussions
 - Videos, Overheads, Writing on board
 - Web-based courses/assignments

Disability Services (DS) Office



- **Determines eligibility** for accommodations
- Provides college **support and advocacy** services
- Can help students develop **learning strategies**
- Will refer the student to **additional resources** on campus
- Students must **disclose directly** to the **Disability Services Office** and submit documentation
- Accommodations must be **requested in a timely manner** or they may be denied
- **Services** at a 2-year community college may differ from services provided at a 4-year college/university

Check with each college-this office **can go by other names** (i.e. Office of Accommodative Services, Student Resource Center, Student Support Services, Office of Accessibility)



Sources of Documentation



1. Student's Self-report

The student is a vital source of information regarding how they may be limited by an impairment



Students can **expect discussions** about the need for accommodations; narrative of their experience of disability, barriers, and effective/ineffective accommodations

2. Observation and Interaction

The impressions and conclusions formed by higher education disability professionals during interviews and conversations with students



Looking for the connection between the **impact of the disability**, the **described barrier**, and the **requested accommodation**

3. Information From External or Third Parties

May include educational or medical records, reports and assessments created by health care providers, school psychologists, teachers, or the educational system



Colleges may request **within reason**, additional documentation of a **diagnosed disability** and the **impact** it has on learning. Most colleges do not provide diagnostic evaluations

Be familiar with laws. The Americans with Disabilities Act-Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) explains that requiring extensive medical evidence of impairments undervalues the individual's history and experience with disability. Colleges **can't create** documentation processes that are burdensome or **have the effect of discouraging students from seeking protections and accommodations** to which they are entitled.



Potential Evaluators



Best Practice for Documentation

Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD)

Physical/medical disability

Physician or health care professional

Specific learning disability

Psychologist or Learning Disabilities Specialist

Psychological/emotional disability

Psychiatrist or a licensed psychologist

- Lists the **credentials** of the evaluator(s)
- A **diagnostic statement** identifying the disability
- **Description** of
 - the diagnostic **methodology** used
 - the current **functional limitations**
 - the **expected progression or stability** of the disability
 - **current** and **past** accommodations, services and/or medications
- **Recommendations** for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or corresponding support services

Colleges **do not prefer or require** high school **504 Plans** as documentation of a disability. Any reference to Section 504 pertains **to the law only**. Submit available documentation before seeking an additional evaluation.

TIP

Accessing Accommodative Services



Accessing **disability services is a separate process** from the admissions process

- ✓ **Requesting** accommodations is **voluntary**
- ✓ No deadline
- ✓ No cost to student

Accommodations from high school **do not automatically transfer** to a college setting-an IEP or 504 Plan does not “follow” the student to college

- If eligible, the student will pick up an “Accommodation Letter” which **only identifies the approved accommodations**, not the disability (which is confidential)
- Student must understand how instructors will be informed of approved accommodations and **can choose if and when to use them**
- May be required to request a new accommodation letter at the **beginning of a new semester**

Once approved, accommodations will remain in place at that college. Transferring to a different college will entail a new, yet similar, process.



Print Disability-Alternate Format

Some students experience barriers to **reading standard print** or **accessing instructional materials** (*i.e. reading disability, visual impairment, mobility impairment*)

- Printed materials can be **converted** into an accessible, **alternate format** (*i.e. electronic text, audio books, large print, or Braille*)
- **Screen reader** software (*Assistive Technology*) can **read** the written words(**e-text**) **out loud**
- Alternate format **requests** must be **submitted and approved well in advance** of need

Students can make an appointment for a demonstration on how this works. Software is installed on most computers in college learning labs/centers.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations

- Extended test time (up to double time)
- Tests read (by computer software)
- Separate testing location
- Use of computer (spell check/typing)
- Use of calculator
- Books in alternate format
- Use of assistive technology
- Access to class notes (note-taker)
- Recording lectures
- Priority registration

Residential Accommodations
(advance notice required) *May be asked for documentation from a physician*

- Accessible rooms/bathrooms
- Fire strobe equipped rooms
- Attached / suite bathrooms for close bathroom proximity or increased privacy
- Extra refrigerator to store medication
- Single rooms (limited)



TIP

Accommodations can change based upon the situation. Inform DS office if accommodations are not producing the **expected results or are not provided/denied** by the instructor.

Coping With Stress



Poll: Give a Thumbs Up 👍

- If you would say that most students **know what strategies they can use** to help them deal with stress AND **actually use those strategies** consistently?
- With a lack of coping strategies, students may: miss classes, engage in unhealthy or risky behaviors, develop mental health disorders or drop out
- **Know where and how to access mental health/crisis services both on campus and in the local community**





How Can Students Prepare?

- **Participate** in all transition **planning meetings at school**-this provides an opportunity to make choices and improve problem solving and decision-making skills
- **PRACTICE educating others** about their disability/learning style and what's needed to be successful in an academic setting (self-advocacy skills)
- **PRACTICE asking questions** at home, in school and in the community
- Start using a **weekly/monthly planner**/cell phone (calendar, timers, reminders etc.) to improve time management/organization skills
- Expand **independent living skills** (meal preparation, banking, personal care, use of public transportation options, making appointments)
- Attend **college events, visit campuses** while classes are in session

In-School Transition Activities



- Match individual **strengths to career choices/college majors**
- Practice **electronic communication skills** including sending emails and attachments
- Learn different methods of **note-taking systems** (from textbook, from listening)
- Learn and practice **study skill strategies**(to increase concentration, decrease procrastination, boost memory, test preparation)
- Learn how to make use of **library/media center resources**
- Explore and experiment with **available assistive technology** options
- **Identify types of clubs** available at each college of interest (a good way to meet other students with similar interests)
- **Discuss alternate options**(“Plan B”) - What if plans to attend college change or things do not work out once there?

Confidence-Building Starts Now

- It's normal to feel a mixture of excitement and apprehension
- In college, students are considered adults, in charge of their education and needed services, so parents must be ready to empower rather than rescue
- Students must have their own reasons for attending college



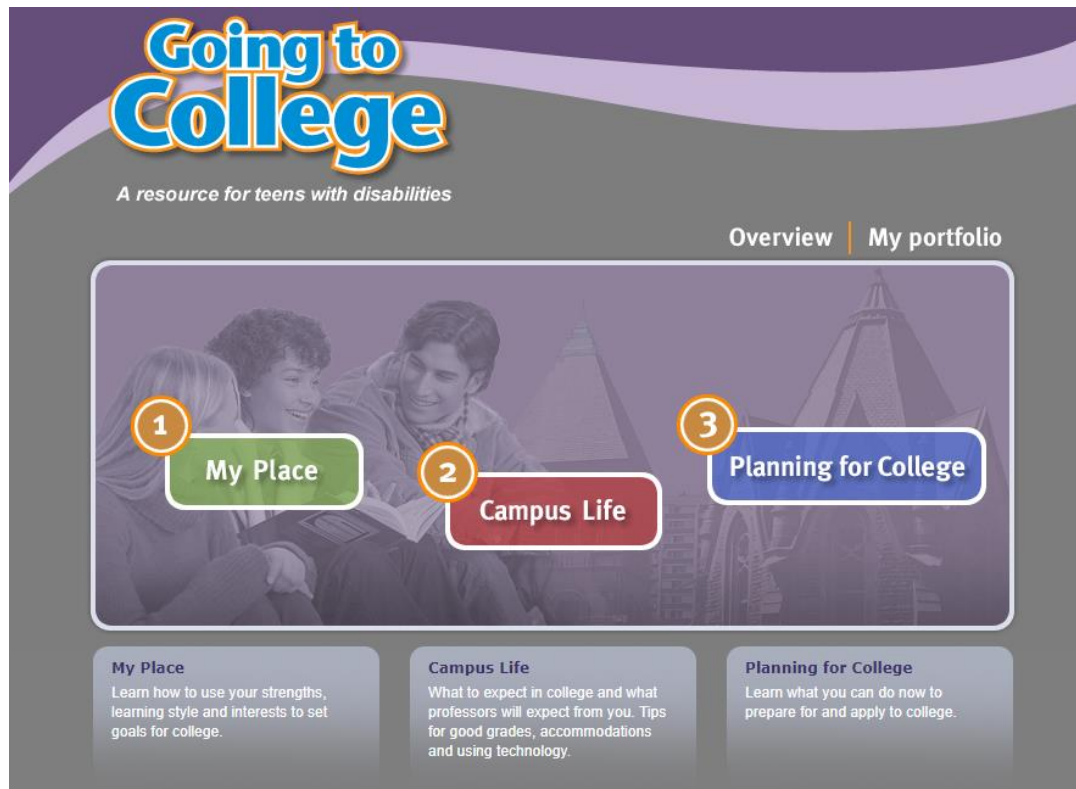
- With practice, self-advocacy skills will grow and students will feel more comfortable using them
- **Don't doubt your ability.** There are many students that have overcome disabilities and found successful academic lives and rewarding careers
- Remember, the college accepts students who **they believe have the potential to graduate!**

Resources

Going to College

Offers information for high school students with disabilities about preparing for and going to college.

<http://www.going-to-college.org/>



• Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR):

- Coaching and Communication Supports for Post-Secondary Education and Employment
<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/new-services-meet-wioa-requirements-vocational-rehabilitation>

- Do You Want a Job That Requires a College Degree?
<https://vimeo.com/483376782>

• College campus disability resource database <https://www.cedardatabase.org/index.php/>

- Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology(DO-IT) University of Washington, Seattle.
Accommodation strategies sorted by academic activity and by disability

<https://www.washington.edu/doit/resources/disabilities-and-accommodations/accommodations>

QUESTIONS?

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GOOD LUCK!