

Making the Transition from High School to College for Students with Disabilities:

Developed for NCLD by Colleen Lewis, Director
Office of Disability Services, Columbia University

KNOW THE DIFFERENCES

High School	College
<p>Special Education Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School personnel “find you” and decide what eligibility for services and supports 	<p>Accommodations Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must request help; no one will come to find you.
<p>Where you receive services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Education classroom, Resource Room, related service provider room (e.g. speech) 	<p>Where you receive services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differs from one every to another (“Office of Disability Support Services,” “Disabled Student Services,” “Special Services”,...)
<p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated by school psychologist or CSE appointed staff person School develops IEP from documentation and test results Paid for by school 	<p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must provide “proof” of your disability (e.g. HS records, independent reports e.g. medical, mental health, educational) Colleges can set their own guidelines for documentation (e.g. no more than 3 years old, adult assessment measures,...) High schools are not required to do a comprehensive evaluation before graduation After HS, you re responsible for paying for new evaluations
<p>Special Education Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the mandate and funding to schools for in-school special education services as well as transportation/ buses to school, physical, occupational, speech therapy, and tutoring 	<p>Civil Rights Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Colleges are required only to offer accommodations & support services; not services of a personal nature. Tutoring is not required under ADA. Some colleges offer tutoring through disability services and some colleges have tutoring centers for all students. Foreign Language waivers & other course substitutions are not automatic

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

While still in high school you need to:

1. Find out about your disability:

- Talk to your parents, high school special education teacher, or guidance counselor to learn about your specific disabilities
 - Understand the academic impact of your disability
 - Understand your areas of strength and weakness
 - Understand how your disability might affect future employment and/or career choices
 - Make sure that you have current documentation (request updated testing or a re-evaluation before you leave HS)
 - Read your disability documentation and understand what it says.

2. Actively participate in all transition related meetings (i.e. IEP, 504, IPE)

- Participate in self-advocacy training
- Learn to express your current and future needs, concerns, interests, and preferences
- Know what your rights & responsibilities are and what the grievance procedures are at your selected colleges

3. Develop a personal information file with disability related information:

- Disability documentation
 - Current high school records (e.g. grade transcript, standardized achievement testing scores)
 - Medical records (if relevant to educational progress)
 - Copy of current IEP or 504 plan
 - College Entrance Exam results/ info (SAT, ACT)
 - Psychological and educational evaluation records

4. Select and Plan College Choices

- Select the colleges you'd consider attending (important tip: do NOT chose schools by the amount of services that offer; make your initial selections based on whether the school offers the programs of study that most interest you)
- Visit each campus (make sure to meet the person(s) in charge of the Office of Disability Services)
- Do your homework! Consider:
 - What services/programs each prospective college provides through their disability support office or other office that handles disability accommodations
 - How often are services available? Are the service providers on campus and available on as as-needed basis?
 - Are there restrictions (e.g. times per week) or additional costs for using these services?

5. Apply—Good luck!

KNOWING YOUR OPTIONS

All colleges are required by law to provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Some colleges offer specialized programs that are highly structured and include a wide range of academic and behavioral supports. Other colleges offer support services that are less intensive and that require students to ‘take the lead’ in monitoring their progress and managing their special needs on campus.

Programs vs. Support Services

- **Programs** are specifically designed for students with disabilities and provide more in-depth services and accommodations. Not all colleges have these types of programs. When offered, the most common types are designed for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD. These programs usually have costs in addition to tuition. These programs often provide one-on-one tutoring and sessions with a learning disability specialist.
- **Support Services** are the resources available at no cost for students with disabilities. Support services include reasonable accommodations, such as extended time for assignment and testing, note-takers, the use of a calculator, and preferential seating in classrooms.

CONGRATULATIONS! **YOU’VE BEEN ACCEPTED TO A COLLEGE!** **NOW WHAT?**

1. **Register with the college’s disability services office or program. Remember you need to:**
 - ❑ Contact that campus office—they will not find you.
 - ❑ Provide disability documentation that is current & meets college guidelines.
 - ❑ Request that accommodations you will need (note-takers, assistive listening devices, testing modifications, textbooks on tape, etc.).
 - ❑ Request those accommodations **before** scheduled placement tests or you will not receive accommodations for those tests.
2. **Arrange other supports not provided by the school.**
 - ❑ Do you need things like counseling, medication management, or other supports? Who will provide them for you & how will they affect your schedule?
 - ❑ Develop back up plans for these supports.

SELF-ADVOCACY

What is Self-Advocacy?

- Self-advocacy means speaking or acting for yourself
- It means deciding what is best for you and taking charge of getting it.
- It means standing up for your rights as a person.
- It teaches others about our rights and responsibilities.

Why is it important?

- It helps us to develop assertiveness skills & good communication skills.
- It teaches us to make decisions and choices that affect our lives so that we can be more independent.
- It helps us to develop confidence about our abilities.

When will I use it (at college)?

- When you need additional accommodations.
- When you don't have access to some activity on the campus and you need to have that barrier removed.
- When you are having disability-related difficulty in a class and need some extra assistance.

How can I practice being a self-advocate?

- Understand what your disability is and how it affects you
- Understand your rights and responsibilities under the Section 504 of the Rehab Act and the ADA
- Use this information to achieve your goals and advocate for yourself