



# PREPARING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

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# Variation in Models

- High School – Special Education Model
- College – Accommodations Model



# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE FROM A DISABILITY PERSPECTIVE

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## From a documentation perspective...

- IEP from high school no longer used, but can be considered as a guideline for support services
- Students must submit updated documentation of the disability.

# Documentation

## High School

- Coordinated by school psychologist or appointed sped staff person
- School develops IEP from documentation and test results
- Paid for by school

## College

- You must provide “proof” of your disability
- Colleges set their own guidelines
- High Schools are not required to do a comprehensive evaluation before graduation
- After high school, you are responsible for paying for new evaluations.

# From a legal perspective...

- **ADA** requires access to programs and services, and auxiliary aids to ensure effective communication, (College)  
....but not a free and appropriate public education.(High School)

# Laws

## High School

### Special Education Law

- IDEA – the individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides the mandate and funding to schools for special education services as well as other services

## College

### Civil Rights Law

- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Colleges required only to offer accommodation and support services.
- Tutoring not required
- Foreign language waivers and other course substitutions not automatic or guaranteed

# From a curriculum perspective...

- Students should not assume that the services and curriculum modifications made in high school will be automatically provided in college.
- The college has the right to approve or deny services which are not reasonable or constitute an undue burden.
- Students should have completed the necessary prerequisite college preparation courses in high school and should be ready to continue with reasonable support.

# From an advocacy perspective...

- Colleges are not required or expected to seek out students with disabilities.
- The student is responsible for making all disclosures and contacts, not the parents or guardians.

# Understanding the Disability is Key

- How and when was your disability diagnosed?
  - Talk to parents, teachers, doctor, psychologist, guidance counselor to really learn how it affects your learning
- What are the functional limitations of your disability?
- Student must be comfortable about disclosing. Self understanding is the key to self disclosing.

# To disclose, or not to disclose...

- Students are not required to disclose a disability. We cannot ask questions about a disability unless the student discloses the information.
- Disclosure may explain deficits in an application that are the direct result of the disability.

# Differences between High School and College Requirements

- Class time
- Study time
- Tests
- Grades
- Teachers
- Freedom

# Comprehensive Program?

- Trained staff that offer:
  - specialized tutoring,
  - adaptive technology,
  - counseling and
  - study support.

# Support services?

- Resources available at no cost
- Services include reasonable accommodations such as:
  - extended time on tests,
  - note takers,
  - use of a calculator etc.

# Program Modifications?

- Alternative Admissions Requirements
- Priority registration
- Special financial arrangements
- Special housing requests
- Substituting one course for another
- Part-time rather than full-time study

# The Transitional Plan

“Individualized transition planning should be viewed as a golden opportunity for students to shape their own academic destinies by learning about their disabilities, asking questions, presenting ideas, and advocating for themselves.”

Loring C. Brinckerhoff

# Essential Pieces of the Transition

- **Help kids understand their disability**
  - Understand the impact of the disability
  - Understand their strengths/weaknesses
  - Understand how the disability might affect future employment/career choices
  - Make sure they have current documentation
  - Read and review reports with them so they understand what is said.

# Active Participation in all transition related meetings (IEP, 504)

- Teach them self advocacy skills
- Teach them to express current and future needs, concerns, interests and preferences
- Teach them their rights & responsibilities. Look at sample grievance policies with them.
- Include the student as an active member of the transition team and perhaps even as the leader.

# **Develop a personal information file with all disability related information**

- Current High School records
- Medical records
- Copy of current IEP or 504 plan
- College entrance exam results
- Psychological and educational evaluation records

# Some statistics

- 94% of high school students with LD get help.
- 17% of college students with LD seek assistance.
- 34% of LD students complete a four year degree within 8 years of finishing high school.
- 50% of all students nationally graduate within 6 years

National Center for Learning Disabilities



# FIVE AREAS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING A TRANSITION PLAN

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# 1. Assessment

- Identify strengths/ weaknesses
- Consider types of work that might interest student
- College? Vocational School? Service? Work?
- Updated diagnostic tests
- Social Skills
- Assistive Technology needs

## 2. Development

### **IF college:**

- Research colleges,
- Visit colleges,
- Attend a college night,
- Meet with peers in college,
- Discuss financial issues.

### **IF work**

- Find a volunteer job in the in the area of your choice,
- Get an internship,
- Job shadowing,
- Review want ads,
- Review job placement programs

## 3. Matching

- **For college** – discuss choices and analyze requirements for acceptance, services provided etc.
- **For work-** team considers demands and expectations of individual jobs.

## 4. Preparation and Training

### For College

- Identify required coursework needed
- Identify supports needed to succeed
- Pinpoint accommodations needed
- Learn new strategies,
- Address study skills

### For Work

- Assist with applications
- Assist with interviews and any test preparation.
- Provide instruction on job seeking skills.
- Identify accommodations that may be needed on the job.

## 5. Placement and Follow-up

- Monitor the progress once the student is in the desired setting.
- Make suggestions/recommendations and/or act as an advocate if the student needs help.

# Case study

The case of Katie- a smart Boston College freshman-who was poorly prepared by her high school, didn't disclose her disability, and was promptly placed on academic probation.