Promoting Transitional Success in Post-Secondary Education

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Objectives

- Feel more confident advising students with disabilities as to their post-secondary education choices.
- Identify at least 3 college admission requirement issues that college-bound students with disabilities need to anticipate.
Objectives

- Identify additional financial aid and scholarship resources for students with disabilities.

- Identify ways to encourage and incorporate empowerment and self-advocacy practices over sense of entitlement into the middle and high school settings; possibly through utilization of the IEP.
Snap shot of a student that would benefit from these services

- Typically requires assistance for Activities of Daily Living
- Possibly benefits from assistive technology (voice recognition, word prediction, text conversion)
- Requires academic accommodations
Barriers to Transitional Success

- Ineffectual preparation for personal emancipation and social/vocational mobility.
  - Limited self-advocacy preparation
    - Limited knowledge of personal safety strategies
    - Inadequate disability management strategies
    - Poorly developed executive skills
    - Insufficient knowledge and training in health and wellness promotion
    - Limited or no work experience
Academic Development

- Identify academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Explore areas of natural interest/recreation/hobbies.
- Work cooperatively with school district personnel to support academic needs/accommodations.
- Educate school district personnel about transitional needs to maximize independence.
- Help child develop study skills and strategies that are best for him/her.
- Cognizant of resources specifically available to students with disabilities and options for financial aid.
- Child’s IEP should include the course of study needed to transition successfully into high school and smoothly to higher education.
- Remediate basic skill deficits in reading, mathematics, oral and written language.
Discussions Before High School

**Academic Development ~ Middle School/Jr. High**

- Encourage child to take challenging classes in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, foreign language, and the fine and practical arts.

- Investigate which high school classes are needed for college acceptance/college preparatory curriculum.

- Remediate basic skill deficits in reading, mathematics, oral and written language.

- Plan to graduate with a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies diploma and plan the course of study accordingly.
Increasing Independence/Self-Advocacy/Empowerment in High School

Self-Care ~ Activities of Daily Living
- Expect student to take on more responsibility for self:
  - Scheduling staff
  - Providing feedback to staff
- If family members are the only caregivers, suggest transitioning and hiring others to provide care.
- **Provide learning and practice situations for students to become self-advocates in various practical situations.**
  - Decrease the amount of time an aide is with the student 1:1 throughout the day in school.
  - Care givers explain to student how things are done (personal care) so that the student can explain to future personal care assistants.
Increasing Independence/ Empowerment in High School

**Freshman Year Tasks ~**

Learn the specific nature of disability and how to explain it to others

- Assist student by carefully planning course of study.
- Self-advocate in developing the transition plan with Counselor and IEP team.
- Encourage student to be active in IEP conference, especially the transition plan.
- Work with student to be sure that standard and verified credits are planned.
- Encourage student to develop academic independence by learning how to use the academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, and learning strategies.
- Make college resources available within school hours.
- Explore career options with student.
- Encourage student involvement in school/community-based activities of interest.
- Offer resources for various professions to find out what they like and dislike about their jobs and what kind of education is needed.
Increasing Independence/Empowerment in High School

Sophomore Year Tasks ~

- Reinforce participation in extracurricular activities, hobbies, and work experiences.
- Identify interests, aptitudes, values, and opportunities related to occupations of interest.
- Meet with student to discuss colleges and their requirements.
- Assist student in using testing adjustments and auxiliary aids to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) in the fall.
- Inform when college representatives are visiting the high school and scheduled college fairs.
- Encourage students to visit college campuses and talk to college students about their campus experiences.
- Gather information about college programs that offer the disability services you need (you may want to add these to a transition portfolio).
Increasing Independence/Empowerment in High School

**Junior Year Tasks ~**

- Focus on matching student interests and abilities to academic majors and colleges
- Encourage students to keep a current list of the academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services you use in high school in a transition portfolio
- Suggest that students take a course to prepare for the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT) Test or for the *ACT Assessment* (ACT).
- Assist student in requesting accommodations to take the SAT or ACT in the spring. Suggest re-taking more than once to maximize improving their score
- Discuss a possible career goal (they can always change your mind!) ~ determine a college major consistent with this career goal
- Work with IEP team to identify time management, study skills, assertiveness training, stress management, and exam preparation strategies
- Review information with student about college programs that offer the disability services required Also, encourage student to add these to a transition portfolio
- Inform student about college representatives who visit your high school, scheduled college fairs
Increasing Independence/Empowerment in High School

**Junior Year Tasks ~**

- Encourage scheduling of college visits and visits with disability service providers to verify the available services and how to access them.
- Encourage student to identify people to ask for recommendations - teachers, counselors, employers, coaches, etc.
- Encourage students to research the availability of financial aid from Federal, State, Local, and private sources.
- Encourage student to research the availability of scholarships provided by organizations, such as corporations, labor unions, professional associations, religious organizations, and credit unions.
- Encourage student to Contact the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) Counselor to determine eligibility for DRS services.
- Encourage student to Invite the DRS counselor to attend IEP meeting.
- Be aware that students documentation of their disability is current. Colleges usually want current testing, usually less than three years old when the student begins college.
Increasing Independence/Empowerment in High School

**Senior Year Tasks ~**

- Meet with student early in the year to discuss their post-graduation plans.
- Encourage student to visit campuses early in the year, if not already visited ~ if possible, have a member of the IEP team attend college visits.
- Assist student with interview techniques ~ provide feedback on college essays.
- Role-play college interviews with students.
- Review with student pros and cons of accepted schools.
- Encourage student to finalize transition portfolio so that it contains at least the following:
  - Copies of psychological and educational evaluations
  - Transcripts
  - ACT or SAT scores
  - Current or latest IEP
  - Medical records (if appropriate)
  - A writing sample or other work samples related to choice of a major
  - Letters of recommendation from teachers and employers
  - Current list of academic accommodations and auxiliary aids and services you may need in college (be sure to include assistive technologies)
College ~ Examples of Academic Supports

- Accessible location for the classroom and place for faculty to meet with student
- Adaptive seating in classrooms, and adjustable lab or drafting tables
- Note takers, tape recorders, laptop computers or copies of instructor and/or classmate’s notes
- Assistive computer equipment/software:
  - voice activated word processing, word prediction, keyboard and/or mouse modification
- Test accommodations:
  - extended time, separate location, scribes, access to adapted computers
- Some flexibility with deadlines if assignments require access to community resources
- Lab assistant
- Accessible parking in close proximity to the building
- Taped texts
- Advance planning for field trips to ensure accessibility/ability to arrange a Personal Assistant
College ~ Non-Academic Supports

- Adapted Athletics
- Personal Assistance Service
- Driver Education
- Career Services
- Physical Therapy
- Recruitment / Internship Opportunities specifically targeted toward students with disabilities
- Transportation
Finances ~ Disability Related Expenses

The student with a disability is often faced with additional expenses not incurred by other students. These may include:

- Special equipment and its maintenance.
- Cost of services for personal use such as personal care attendants.
- Transportation, if traditional means are not accessible.
- Medical expenses not covered by insurance that relate directly to the individual’s disability.

Students should be sure to inform the aid administrator of disability-related expenses that may previously have been covered by the family budget, e.g., service animals, personal assistants.

Leaving home often necessitates the purchase of new or additional equipment that will allow the student to be independent at college. For example, the student’s secondary school may have furnished an adapted computer or other disability-related equipment, but that equipment belongs to and remains at the high school after the student graduates.

Once these expenses have been identified, students should provide the financial aid administrator with documentation of any disability-related expense that is necessary to ensure attainment of the student’s educational goal.
Financial Resources

- **Fastweb** [http://www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
  - FastWeb is the nation’s largest source of local national and college-specific scholarships.

- **BrokeScholar** ~ [http://www.brokescholar.com](http://www.brokescholar.com)

- **College.net** ~ [http://www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

- Scholarship information can be found under scholarship search engines on the Internet as well as with the office of financial aid or the office of students with disabilities on college campuses.

- **CREATING OPTIONS: 2007 FINANCIAL AID FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES** ~
Making Important Choices ~ Leading Empowered Lives

- A day in the life of a college student...
Questions & Contact Information

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