

College Navigator

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What will be covered today

- **Setting the expectation**
- **Preparing for higher ed readiness in high school**
 - **What's the big difference?**
- **Finding the right fit for your child**
 - **Developing logistics**

Clearing the high hurdles of low expectations



When do I start the conversation?

- **Early, and...not that often, not at first.**
- **Conversations should begin in middle school to gauge your child's interests in what they'd like to be when they get older.**
- **As a family, start to financially plan if your child's career goal includes college.**

Prep time:

Cook time:

- **Setting own alarms**
- **Making own school lunch**
- **Picking out own clothes**
- **Taking initiative in class**
- **Doing own homework (without being asked!)**
- **Getting involved with social clubs/sports**
- **After school chores**
- **Caring for younger siblings**
- **Creating their own social lives**



High School

vs

University

Your time is structured by your parents and teachers

You manage your own time



In High School

The school identifies students with disabilities.

The school district is responsible for evaluating and documenting the student's learning disability.

The school automatically incorporates accommodations into the student's daily schedule once a disability is documented.

The school modifies the educational programs.

Parents are advocates for their children

Special classes and placement must be available for students.

Parents are notified and must give permission for any decisions regarding their son or daughter.

An IEP meeting is held to determine placement and appropriate services.

The school provides assessment of disabilities.

In College

The school protects a student's right to privacy and confidentiality.

The student is responsible for providing current documentation of the disability to the college.

The student must request accommodations each time they are needed.

The college makes reasonable adjustments in instructional programs which do not alter the essential content or requirements of a course or program.

Students are their own advocates.

Colleges are not required to provide special classes or programs for students with disabilities.

Parents are not notified of services their son or daughter requests unless the student grants permission for that information to be released.

Students work with college professionals and instructors to determine if and what services are appropriate.

The school provides access to testing services which are accessible to persons without disabilities.

<https://www.cui.edu/studentlife/disability-learning-resource-center/index/id/19328>

Options

- **Two Year College**
- **Four Year College**
- **Dual Enrollment**
- **Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative**
- **Auditing courses**
- **Online courses (some specific to students with disabilities)**
- **Trade School**
- **Colleges with specialty services (U of I, Landmark, etc.)**

College Shopping

- **Will my child live on campus or commute?**
- **How will they get to school everyday?**
- **Are the online courses accessible?**
- **Are the dorms accessible for my child? (physical, sensory, etc.)**
- **What size are the classrooms?**
- **Should my child go to school in the city or a rural setting?**
- **Can the dining hall options meet my child's allergy needs?**

Disability Office Shopping

- **How many students are served in this office?**
- **Would my child have a designated person to assist them?**
- **Is there some sort of plan created between this office and my child?**
- **Can my child have untimed testing/homework?**
- **Do you have note takers?**
- **What about (un)excused absences?**
- **What is your inclement weather policies?**
- **And everything else under the sun... 😊**

They're in...now what do they need in order to succeed?

- **Trusting relationship with Disability Supports/Professors**
- **Personal Care Attendant's**
 - **Durable medical equipment**
 - **Private bathroom**
- **Orientation & Mobility Specialist**
- **Mentor/Mentee**
- **Transportation to/from school**
- **Assistive Technology**
 - **Specific software**
 - **Use of tape recorder**

What are we doing at Easter Seals?

Identifying the problem

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Looking at unmet needs

The creation of our College Navigator program

Among students with disabilities who graduate from high school and attend a postsecondary education program, completion rates are low. The majority of students with disabilities in NLTS2 failed to graduate or to receive a degree from their program up to eight years after high school. Among students in the 2005 cohort working toward any type of postsecondary credential, only 40.7 percent graduated or received a degree, versus 52.4 percent of the general population. Only 34.2 percent of students with disabilities working toward a four-year degree were able to graduate within eight years, compared to 51.2 percent of the general population (Newman et al., 2011).

Personal stories from ESMA clients

- **A young man with ASD indicate that had he had a modicum of the specialized instruction he was receiving in high school, he would have been able to thrive in college on a level playing field. Instead, he participated in a training certificate program where he barely finished due to bullying from his repetitive clarifying questions in class. When asked what would have helped him, he said ‘someone to help redirect his focus on the smaller details and someone to provide specialized academic tutoring versus the standard tutoring’.**

- **A young man living with Schizophrenia indicated similar supports as the young man above; however, he helped shape the services offered with specific examples. For instance, he didn't know what a curriculum was; his medication causes him to be drowsy in the mornings so he could have benefitted from classes later in the day, but didn't understand he could do that. He also needed to have each professor fill out a form every single time he had an exam, which meant more for him to worry about with deadlines. Once his anxiety rose from lack of support, his primary disability exacerbated, causing him to focus exclusively on his health, not academics.**

Services offered

- **Setting personal schedules (time and organizational management)**
- **In-depth orientation & mobility (ex. Understanding curriculum, selecting classes, etiquette, etc.)**
- **Identify and instruct in use appropriate assistive technology**
- **Academic redirection and focus inside/outside (specific instruction)**
- **Up front advocacy/education with professors (disclosure, explanation of accommodations, streamlining processes per semester)**
- **Integrate assistive technology into daily routine**
- **Develop an action plan for the first and second semesters of college**

Goals of College Navigator

- **Help identify potential barriers and problem solve around them with college staff**
- **Advocate with the student on identifying their needs and being able to explain them to college staff**
- **Create a supportive environment between the college and student to ensure success**
- **Improve outcomes for students with disabilities completing higher education**

Desired outcomes

- **Lasting higher educational commitment**
- **Social experiences leading to lifelong relationships**
- **Matriculation among peers with and without disabilities contributing to the average norm**
 - **Provision of intern experience**
- **Leading to a higher employment potential**