

THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

A Guide for Parents of Young People with Disabilities

In Brief: When you transition from high school to college, the accommodations and services you may have received through an IEP in high school are not automatically carried forward. As a college student, you will be responsible for identifying and documenting your disability to the college, and for identifying and requesting the accommodations that you need.

High School – Oversight: IDEA Law. Individual ages 3-21 with a documented disability. Accommodations are requested during IEP process with the help of an IEP team.

College – Oversight: ADA Law. Any individual with a documented disability. Student is required to request accommodations via the college’s DRC office.

In high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides for students with disabilities to have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This plan includes supports and accommodations needed by the student in the classroom, and may include therapies.

In college, students are no longer covered by IDEA. Instead, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act provide you with the accommodations you will need.

There are some big differences between being covered by IDEA and being covered by ADA.

When you are getting ready to start college, keep in mind that you will need to:

- Contact the college’s Disability Resource Center (DRC) and tell them about your disability
- Provide all documentation of disability that the DRC requires
- Understand the kinds of accommodations that may be provided at your college
- Identify and request needed accommodations

Don't Forget:

- IEP records do not automatically transfer to your college. Keeping your own copies is a good idea.
- It will be up to you to make sure that the accommodations you and the DRC have set up are being used.
- There are no special education teachers at college. Unless a legal guardian has been appointed, parents/guardians will need the student's permission to access school information, including anything about accommodations, once the student turns 18.

Questions to Ask the Disability Resource Center Staff:

- What documentation of disability is required?
- What kinds of accommodations can be made?
- I need an accommodation right away. How long does it take your office to approve my request?
- Will DRC staff help figure out what accommodations are needed, or do I do that by myself?
- Who provides the list of accommodations to the professors?
- How often will I need to check in with the DRC about my accommodations?

KEY POINTS:

Before Starting College:

- Identify and request the accommodations that you require (Note: During your senior year transition IEP process, ask your IEP team to help you list accommodations that will help you meet your post-high school goals).
- Be able to document your disability in order to request those accommodations
- Understand your college's Disability Resource Center's policies and procedures for requesting accommodations.
- Advocate for yourself! Once in college, you will no longer have an IEP team requesting accommodations on your behalf.

Examples of accommodations you might request in college are:

- Audiobooks and other kinds of assistive technology
- Note-taking assistance
- Un-timed and/or alternative formats for tests
- And more, depending on your identified needs

Useful Website: Think College "Rethinking College" www.thinkcollege.net

Partners for Employment (PFE), a program at The University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability, provides training and resources to advance inclusive employment practices in New Mexico. Visit our website: <https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/other-disability-programs/partners-for-employment/>