

Collaboration in Transitioning to Postsecondary Education

Transitioning from high school to postsecondary education requires a collaborative effort. Listed below are the primary responsibilities and roles of the most important participants in this effort.

Student Roles

Success in college depends on the student's motivation, independence, self-direction, self-advocacy, and academic abilities. To experience a successful transition, students should:

- Understand their specific disability, including its effect on learning and work.
- Develop a realistic self-assessment, an ability to sustain effort, realistic goals, and a willingness to take risks
- Explore postsecondary options and entrance requirements.
- Select courses that meet college entrance requirements.
- Develop and use study skills effectively: test preparation, note-taking, time-management and test-taking strategies.
- Practice self-advocacy skills in order to learn about and access resources that will provide information and assistance.
- Acquire knowledge of rights and responsibilities.
- Prepare for applying to and accessing higher education.
- Participate in the development of appropriate, individualized transition goals in the postsecondary area that will help them achieve their goal of further education.
- TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR FUTURE!

Parent Roles

The primary role of parents during this process is to encourage and support students to plan and attain their educational goals. Parents should also foster independent decision-making and self-advocacy. To contribute to a successful transition, parents should:

- Be involved in planning and ensuring that their son or daughter is also fully included in the planning.

- Assist their son or daughter in learning and performing each of his or her responsibilities.
- Understand their son or daughter's areas of disabilities and how these disabilities can interfere with school learning, work, sports, living skills, interactions and relationships.
- Communicate confidence in their son or daughter's ability to make thoughtful choices and have success later on. If needed, help their student reframe his or her self-image.
- Encourage their son or daughter to develop the maximum independence in learning, working and living skills, which are critical for success in higher education.
- Assess the maturation level of their son or daughter, and as appropriate, move from coach to cheerleader.
- Reformulate impossible situations into great opportunities.
- Anticipate financial obligations well in advance of applying to schools and be prepared to investigate sources of money and other financial supports. Students with disabilities may have additional expenses.
- Talk about future options. Help their son or daughter establish and achieve goals.

High School Personnel Roles

High school personnel must involve students in looking beyond high school toward postsecondary education. This is accomplished by initiating, designing, and evaluating effective transition plans, as well as coordinating services. To contribute to a successful transition, high school personnel should:

- Provide support, resources, and time to foster collaboration among PPT team members, being sure to include students and parents in the entire process.
- Be sensitive to the student's cultural diversity and the values of the student and family.
- Promote the student's self-esteem and confidence by providing increased responsibility and decision making.
- Provide appropriate counseling with course selection and academic support services.
- Ensure that the student has the opportunity to acquire and practice effective learning strategies.
- Help the student use a range of accommodations and technological aids.
- Help the student self-evaluate his or her dependence on external supports and encourage the shift to more independence when appropriate.

- Help the student develop self-advocacy and self-determination skills, including a realistic understanding of his or her disability and how to use this information for better self-understanding and communication with others.
- Engage in communication with postsecondary disability service providers in order to facilitate the transition process.
- Disseminate information about admissions, documentation of a disability, accommodations and auxiliary aids, curriculum requirements, and delivery of services to students with disabilities.