Preparing Students with Disabilities for Successful College Transition for Students

June 2018

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Steps For Successful Transition

- Learn the difference between laws K-12 vs. college
- Learn about commonly (or not) college accommodations
- Understand students’ responsibilities and rights at college
- Develop essential skills
- Learn the rules on disclosure in the application process & how to look at disability services during the college search

Note

*Views are my own, not Columbia U's & I do not represent Columbia here
*Nothing in presentation should be construed as legal or medical advice
* "We" = college DS providers generally
*I don't know everything (Please don't tell anyone!)

Vocabulary

- Disability services (DS) - the name of the office at a college that coordinates students' accommodations (may not be an office)
- Coordinator – title of students’ liaison at DS who coordinates their accommodations
- Documentation – paperwork that shows students have a disability
- Letter of Accommodation (LOA or email – EOA) – letter that tells professors what accommodations have been approved for a student (letter won’t reveal the student’s disability)

The facts - Laws in place

High school
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504 Subpart D (504)

College
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504 Subpart E (504)

What this means: 504 plans and IEPs are not valid once students graduate from high school

IDEA’s Purpose

“... to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs…”

“... to improve educational results for children with disabilities…”

“... to assess, and ensure the effectiveness of, efforts to educate children with disabilities”
Hamblent College Transition

**Purpose of 504**

"...to eliminate discrimination on the basis of handicap in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance..."

**Purpose of ADA**

"...to address the major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities..."

**What K-12 schools have to provide - treatment of students - $300.39 Special Education - IDEA**

(c) General. (1) Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

(3) Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction.

(iii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

"Not applicable under 504 Subpart F, though it does say in 104.33 (a)(2) that "Implementation of an Individualized Education Program may be a means of meeting the standard established in paragraph (b)(1)(i)""

**What K-12 schools have to provide - $300.320 Individualized Education Program - IDEA**

...a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with §§300.329 through 300.324, and that must include—

(1) A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including—

(i) How the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.

(2)(i) A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals.

3. A description of—

(i) How the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals described in paragraph (2) of this section will be measured;

(ii). Periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals.

"No requirement for measurement or reports under 504 D"

**Treatment of students - college**

Section 504 - 104.4

"...the recipient shall assure itself that the other education program or activity, as a whole, provides an equal opportunity for the participation of qualified handicapped persons."

**ADA - Sec. 12182**

"No individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation..."

**What schools have to provide - college**

Section 504

104.44 Academic adjustments

(a) Academic requirements. A recipient to which this subpart applies shall make such modifications to its academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of handicap, against a qualified handicapped applicant or student.

ADA

§ 36.302 Modifications in policies, practices, or procedures.

(a) General. A public accommodation shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures, when the modifications are necessary to afford goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities.

504: BUT...(and this is a big BUT)

"Academic requirements that the recipient can demonstrate are essential to the instruction being pursued by such student or to any directly related licensing requirement will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section."

ADA:

"...unless the entity can demonstrate that making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations."
Note

Laws use "modifications" loosely.

Colleges distinguish between accommodations and modifications.

What does it mean that K-12 and colleges are under different laws?

- **No child left behind** - students have to register with DS in order to receive services.
- **No specially designed instruction** - no special education classes, no specialized tutoring or extra assistance.
- **Colleges don't "adapt content and instructional methodology"** - no guarantee of multi-sensory instruction, expectation is that all students cover all content & complete same assessments.
- **Colleges don't "improve educational results" or "ensure that the child can meet the educational standards"** - they don't have to provide enough accommodations to boost students' GPA so that they can stay enrolled at college.

Take-aways

No high school plans are valid after students graduate from high school. While colleges provide accommodations, they don't follow high school plans and don't generally create "plans" that include goal-setting and progress monitoring.

Different laws mean different demands on colleges vs. high schools for providing services to students with disabilities.

Colleges not required to provide some accommodations (though they likely will!).

Accommodations basics

Nearly all colleges have to provide at least basic accommodations (including the ivies); to be exempt, schools have to reject federal funds (e.g., Pell Grants) and be private and religious.
What does the law say is not reasonable?
Colleges don’t have to provide accommodations if it means:

• Providing a personal service (special tutoring or support) or device (text-to-speech software)

• Making an accommodation that would fundamentally alter the nature of a course or program (math or foreign language substitutions may not be available)

Some Common Accommodations
For exams:

• Extended time for exams (not untimed or unlimited time) – 1.5 or 2.0 (150% or 200%)

• Reduced-distraction site (not distraction-free)

• Permission to use laptop with spellchecker for exams* (sub for no penalty for spelling errors)

• Calculator for exams*

* may not be available if spelling or calculation are being measured by the exam

More Commonly Approved Accommodations
For the classroom:

• Note-taker

• Permission to record

• Permission to use laptop for notetaking

For studying:

• Class texts in alternative format/text-to-speech software

What’s missing?

Extended time to complete papers/projects

Accommodation request advice & take-aways

• Student should work with their case manager to create a list of desired accommodations before they graduate (they should know how to explain why they need each one)

• Students should ask for whatever they want; they might get everything!

• During their college search, students should check graduation requirements for their desired major and colleges

Transition packet #1
This list and the notes about why they are needed goes in an envelope

High schools don’t send disability info (such as IEPs or 504 plans, testing, special letters) to colleges in order to get students registered with DS

Students must register with DS if they want accommodations, even if they said something about their disability in their admissions packet or in an interview when they applied

Responsibilities (if students want accommodations)

Typical process:

• Complete a basic form (may also have to meet with someone at DS for an intake appointment)

• Submit disability documentation & complete any procedures or forms

• Give LOA to professors early in the semester (before they are needed)

• Complete paperwork related to services and accommodations
Hamblet College Transition

What documentation do they need?
For LD – testing typically done by the high school, completed within 3 – 5 years
For ADHD – may just need a doctor’s letter, a form, or testing required for LD plus additional tests (varies a lot from school to school – don’t do anything until/unless your student will be attending a school that requires testing)
Medical/visual/hearing/psychological – letter from treating doctor or have Dr. fill out form

Transition packet #2 – put a copy of the documentation in the envelope along with that list of accommodations to request  

Take-aways
Students are in charge of process (and bear the responsibility for the chances they take if they don’t register)
Registering with DS doesn’t take much time or effort. Tell kids that they don’t have to use their accommodations if they find they don’t need them (“insurance policy”)

Personal qualities of successful students
• motivation
• confidence
• persistence/perseverance
• resilience
• self-discipline
Our students already have these!

Self-advocacy skills that we can help them to develop
Students need to be comfortable asking for help (make sure that they don’t have so much tutoring/support that they never struggle)
They should know their rights just in case there is a problem (but don’t worry – it’s not likely that there will be)
They need to know enough about their disability to ask for the accommodations they need when they register with DS

Other skills that we can help them to develop
• Organizing materials (keeping track of paper & electronic files)
• Time management – setting & keeping schedule, doing schoolwork & activities/chores, planning out long-term projects/papers
• Students need to know how to prepare for big, cumulative exams on their own (study guides are not an accommodation)

Part 5 Take-aways
Personal qualities such as perseverance and motivation are the ones correlated with college success
Self-advocacy skills need to be developed throughout high school because they are so important in college, where the support structure is quite different
Students need self-knowledge and study strategies so that they can work independently and effectively
Admissions & disability services facts

Colleges can’t ask about disabilities and students DO NOT have to identify on their applications in order to get services once they enroll

SAT/ACT scores not flagged, no indicators on transcripts

Bottom line - Students should decide if/how they want to disclose in their application

Three Levels of Disability Services

1. Compliance only (free) – offer only basic accommodations such as extended time for tests, permission to record lectures

2. Enhanced (free) – may offer workshops on time management, access to learning specialist or coach, etc. 1/week, have a full-time assistive technology specialist

3. Fee-for-service programs – may include 2-3 meetings a week with learning specialist or coach, special academic advising, special computer lab, career advising

*See Resources page in handouts for book to help you learn about services – also, use the internet to see what accommodations & services colleges say they offer

Take-aways

• Colleges do not ask about disabilities as part of admissions process.

• Disclosure in the admissions process should be totally up to the student!

• Families should research services as part of the college search to see what each school offers (may not be so important for students who use only common accommodations)

For more information


Read my blog containing bonus content that didn’t fit in the book: echamblet.wixsite.com/ldadvisory

See Resources page in handouts

Explore my website – www.LDadvisory.com – Info for parents & college students, helpful links, free downloads/links to published work & interviews

Follow me on Facebook – Facebook.com/LDadvisory or on Twitter @echamblet
Resources

http://www.nsttac.org/
National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center

http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/parent-20070316.html
Letter to Parents from the Assistant Secretary of the Office for Civil Rights that discusses changes they will find when their child moves from high school to college

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html
Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities - This guide from the US Department of Education answers questions about what kinds of aids and supports colleges are required to provide to students with disabilities

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html
Students with disabilities preparing for postsecondary education: Know your rights and responsibilities - This guide from the U.S. Department of Education offers a basic view of what students should expect from their services, and what they have to do in order to access them.

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transitionguide.html
Transition of Students With Disabilities To Postsecondary Education: A Guide for High School Educators – this guide from U.S. Department of Education answers commonly asked questions teachers have about the postsecondary disability services system

https://www.heath.gwu.edu/awareness-postsecondary-options
The HEATH center at George Washington University, which is a helpful resource for information on transition, provides this great piece on a variety of post-secondary options for students. It also includes a list of questions students can ask themselves to get them thinking about what they really want to do.