



**Learning Links**

# **Transitioning to College**



*lee pesky learning center*

## Transitioning to College

Making the transition from high school to college can be both an exciting and scary time. Students with learning disabilities can feel particularly nervous about the changes, but they are not alone. Most students feel some anxiety when facing the challenge of college, so don't give up! Growing numbers of students with learning disabilities are attending colleges across the country. The following are some strategies and suggestions for making the transition to college not only easier but completely possible!

### General Tips:

- Begin now to develop effective organization and study skills that will be helpful when taking college-level courses.
- Consider saving money for college expenses if you haven't started already; you can also look into college savings plans your state might offer.
- Be prepared with updated testing documentation; this is needed when requesting accommodations for classes.
- Become involved in community or school activities that allow you to explore interests and possible career choices. These add valuable information to college and scholarship applications.
- Remember that parents and counselors can offer advice and support regarding college, but the student is responsible for decision making.

### College Preparation Checklist:

- Talk to your school counselor about fulfilling college requirements.
- Begin taking practice exams for the SAT/ACT, depending on which test the college requires.
- As soon after January 1 as possible during your senior year, complete and submit your FAFSA (*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*) application and other financial aid applications.
- Complete scholarship applications, paying close attention to deadlines (senior year).
- Apply to the colleges of your choice, paying close attention to the details of the application (senior year).

### **Choosing a College:**

- Talk with your school counselor about your needs and goals and what you want/need in a college. Ask for recommendations.
- Consider more than one school. There are many options, including community colleges, vocational training schools, and traditional 4-year universities.
- Visit the schools that interest you. Try to visit while classes are in session in order to get a good “feel” for the school. Also, make sure to check out what kinds of resources and accommodations they offer students with learning disabilities.
- Ask! A good college will be happy to answer any questions you might have. Questions can include:
  - ⇒ Graduation rates?
  - ⇒ Job placement services?
  - ⇒ Counseling services?
  - ⇒ Writing/math tutoring?
  - ⇒ Disability services?
- Consider tuition and fees. Make sure you have a clear idea of what the costs will be and compare tuition and financial aid packages to help you make your final decision.

### **Advocacy Skills & Accommodations:**

- In order to qualify for accommodations you must have current documentation of your learning disability. It is also important that you have specific knowledge of your own strengths and limitations and be able to describe them.
- Become familiar with the accommodations offered at your school. Some common accommodations include: learning resource centers, books on tape, peer tutoring, note-takers, taking exams orally, distraction-free testing rooms, and extended time on exams.
- The college must demonstrate a good faith effort in providing appropriate accommodations. Remember that faculty members have no way of knowing you learn differently than other students if you don't tell them. You need to take responsibility for securing accommodations and reporting it if they are not appropriate.

## How Can Parents Help?

- Encourage your student to look at schools that are “LD friendly”.
- Help your student understand more about their learning style and what their goals are for the future.
- Assist your student with testing documentation.
- Help your student keep track of financial aid deadlines, scholarship deadlines, and college application deadlines.
- Be your student’s biggest supporter. Let them know you believe in them and that they can do this!

## Recommended Books:

*College and Career Success for Students with Learning Disabilities.*

Dolber, R. 1996. NTC Contemporary Publishing Group. \*\*

*Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD.* Seghers, L.

2007. Peterson’s. \*\*

*College Rules! How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College.* Nist-

Olejnik, S. & Holschuh, J. 2007. Ten Speed Press. \*\*

*Self-Advocacy Skills for Students with Learning Disabilities: Making it Happen in College and Beyond.* Reiff, H. 2007. Dude Publishing. \*\*

*The Everything College Survival Book.* Malone, M. 2005.

Adams Media. \*\*

\*\* Available for check-out in the Family Resource Library at Lee Pesky Learning Center

## Web Sources:

Federal Student Aid - [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs)

Free application for Financial Aid – [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Assessment, Academic Intervention, and Counseling services are available at Lee Pesky Learning Center for all students who face learning challenges. For more information about our services and resources, call Lori Sirs, LCSW at 208-577-1106.



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