

# Is There a College for My Child?



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**A Presentation for Parents of  
Students with Learning Differences**

# Overview



- What are the differences between high school and college?
- What steps are involved in the college search and application process?
- How are college visits arranged?
- What standardized tests are required and when should they be administered?
- What is the range of support provided in college?
- What options are available if college is not the next best step for my child?

# Differences Between High School and College



## HIGH SCHOOL

- **Class time:** 30 hrs/week
- **Class size:** 25-30 students
- **Tests:** usually weekly or at end of a chapter; frequent quizzes
- **Grading:** Passing grade is a D

## COLLEGE

- **Class time:** 12 hrs/week
- **Class size:** up to 300 students
- **Usually 2 hours of study for 1 hour of class; vary by professor**
- **Grading:** Passing grade is a C

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## Differences in Teaching

### HIGH SCHOOL

- ◆ Teachers often take attendance
- ◆ May regularly check notebooks and homework assignments
- ◆ Lecture from textbook
- ◆ Use blackboard and worksheets
- ◆ Impart knowledge and facts.

### COLLEGE

- ◆ Professors rarely take attendance
- ◆ Seldom check homework or monitor daily work
- ◆ Lecture and rarely teach from textbook
- ◆ Require library research
- ◆ Challenge students to integrate information from a variety of sources

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## Differences in Access to Support in High School and College



### HIGH SCHOOL - IDEA

- **Language:** Learning DIFFERENCE
- **Identification:** School
- **Assessment:** School
- **Programming:** School/Parent
- **Advocacy:** School/Parent
- **Decision Making:** Team

### COLLEGE - ADA

- **Learning DISABILITY**
- **Student**
- **Student**
- **Student/College**
- **Student**
- **Student**

# Assessing Readiness for College



- Academic Ability
- Level of Independence
- Impact of Disability on Learning
- Independent Living Skills
- Social Skills
- MOTIVATION





# Components of the Application



- Challenging course selection with escalating grades
- Essay(s)
- Standardized test scores (for schools that require them)
- Counselor Recommendation
- Teacher Recommendation(s)
- Extracurricular activities including community service
- Demonstrated interest (campus visit when possible)
- Interview(s) – where required
- Financial aid

*Just because you don't get in doesn't mean you are not qualified.*

# College Visits



- Set up trips geographically
- Call in advance to make appointments for campus tours and information sessions
- Take pictures and notes
- Write down impressions in the car before you leave the parking lot
- Revisit the top two or three choices – make an appointment with the Director of Disability Support Services



# Common Pitfalls

- Missing Deadlines
- Applying to too many colleges
- Not applying to enough colleges
- Not being realistic
- Most students apply to 8-12 colleges



# SAT vs. ACT



## SAT

- Three sections (critical reading/math/writing) each worth 800 points for maximum score of 2400
- Strategies based
- Inferential reading
- Points deducted for incorrect answer

## ACT

- Four sections (English/Math/Reading/Science) each worth 36 points – additional writing section
- Knowledge based
- Literal reading
- No points deducted for incorrect answer

# Tutoring



## *Standardized Test Prep*

- Individual or group tutoring is available for all standardized testing.
- Tutoring should begin at least 12 weeks prior to the test.

## *Content Tutoring*

- Individual tutoring is available for students in all subject areas at all grade levels.
- Tutoring should begin at the first signs of difficulty in a subject area.
- Don't wait! Playing catch up is NEVER fun or easy.

# Required Documentation for Accommodations



*Within 3 years for college - Within 5 years for SAT (ACT varies)*

- Cognitive assessment such as *WAIS-IV* (for college); *WISC-IV* or *WAIS-IV* (for standardized tests)
- Tests of educational achievement such as the *Woodcock – Johnson III*
- Tests of Achievement in reading, math, and written language (usually a *Nelson-Denny*)
- Summary should include a clear statement of the specific diagnosis (*learning disability*) and the rationale for this disability (*DSM-IV diagnosis code*)
- Specific rationale for math and foreign language exemption/substitution



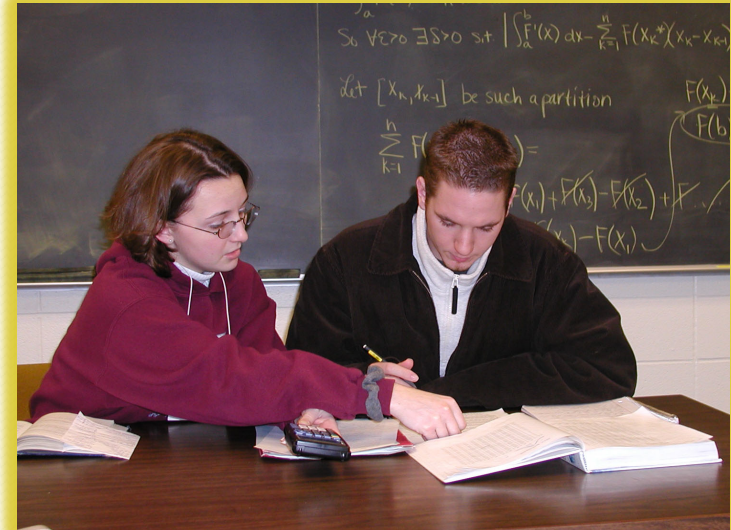


# Spectrum of Support in College

*A psycho-educational evaluation or neuro-psychological report using adult measures is required to receive accommodations in any college*



- Specialized Colleges
- Comprehensive support services within mainstream colleges/universities – usually an additional fee
- Coordinated services – learning specialist(s) follow-up with students
- Administratively staffed disabilities offices



## Other Options

- Gap Year
- Post-Graduate Year
- Two Year Colleges
- Independent Living Skills Programs





# Resources:



## Websites

- Fair Test - [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org)  
Lists schools that are SAT optional
- LD Resources - [www.ldresources.com](http://www.ldresources.com)  
Provides links to information on several LD categories including colleges
- C.H.A.D.D. (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) - [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)  
Grassroots volunteer organization that provides information about ADHD
- Non-Verbal Learning Disorders Association - [www.nlda.org](http://www.nlda.org)  
Provides information about performance based learning disabilities

## Books – *A good starting point. Check college websites for current information*

- The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities by Marybeth Kravets and Imy Wax
- Peterson's Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or ADD
- When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parents' Survival Guide by Carol Barkin

[www.COLLEGEPOSSIBILITIES.com](http://www.COLLEGEPOSSIBILITIES.com)



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