IDEA to ADA: The Difference Between High School and College Accommodations

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Accessible College

- Over 12 years in disability field
- Masters in Special Education from the University of Wisconsin, Bachelors in Secondary Education from DePaul University, Certificate in Health Coaching from Georgetown University
- Peace Corps Volunteer and Fulbright Fellow
- Nearly 6 years as the Associate Director of the Academic Resource Center at Georgetown University (Georgetown's Disability Support Services Office)
  - Supported undergrad, grad, and medical students with physical disabilities and health conditions with their accommodations and provided academic support services to the entire student population

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The Facts

- Approx. **19%** of undergraduate college students report having a disability (Includes: LD, ADD, Mobility, Psychiatric and Health Conditions).
  Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). Digest of Education Statistics, 2017 (2018-070).
- Approx. **7%** of the college students who report having a disability indicate that they have a physical disability/mobility impairment.
  Source: Raue, K., and Lewis, L. (2011). Students With Disabilities at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions(NCES 2011–018). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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The Law

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- Law the governs special ed services and support for students with disabilities, K-12
- Does not apply to private schools

504: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- Students cannot be discriminated against because of a disability
- Private schools, K-12, college

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

- Law that provides for “reasonable accommodations” in the college and employment setting

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

- Law that protects the privacy of a student’s education record

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Accommodations

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents and teachers	Student must self-identify to the Office of Disability Services
Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school	Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance

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Documentation

Establishing Disability:

- Neuropsychological evaluation
- Psychological Evaluation
- Healthcare Provider Letter (diagnosis, outline of functional limitations, recommendation of accommodations)

Contact the college to determine what type of documentation your student will need to submit.

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Documentation

Supplementary Documentation:

- IEP
- 504 Plan
- Letter from high school outlining accommodations
- Letter with ACT/SAT accommodations

Not typically accepted as documentation of a disability. However, they provide a history of accommodations.

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Support in College

- **All** colleges are required to provide “reasonable accommodations” under the ADA
- **Most** colleges offer some educational support to all students, such as a writing center and tutoring services for specific subject areas.
- **Some** colleges also offer academic support services where students can meet with a professional or attend workshops to discuss things like time management, study skills, college reading strategies and test preparation.
- **Some** colleges offer services to support students with learning disabilities (LD), ADD, and other disabilities.
    - Usually application based and fee for service
    - They typically offer academic support, coaching, and mentoring

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College Accommodations

Colleges are required to provide accommodations for all areas of campus life:

- Academics
- Housing
- Transportation
- Dining

When considering the types of accommodations that a student may need, don’t forget to consider their needs holistically.

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Accommodation Considerations

Learning Disabilities, Health/Mental Health Conditions

Academic

Extra time, laptop in class/notetaker, reduced course load, flexibility in attendance, assistive technology, priority registration, service animal

Residential

Single room, fewer roommates, lower floor, private bathroom, Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

Dining

Special diet, food allergies

Transportation

Transport between classes and on campus

Accommodation Considerations

Physical Disabilities, Chronic Health Conditions

Academic

Extra time, priority registration, laptop, scribe, classroom relocation, accessible classroom furniture, service animal

Residential

ADA accessible, Single room, fewer roommates, lower floor, private bathroom, able to have a personal care attendant (PCA) come to/reside in dorm

Recreation

Adaptive fitness equipment, pool lift, accessible student center facilities

Dining

Support with food selection, accessible dining hall furniture

Transportation

Transport between classes and on campus, accessible buses

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Healthcare Considerations

- Connect directly with the student health center
  - At most colleges, student health only provides general care
- General Considerations:
  - Does the student need to be near a major medical center?
    - Mental Health: Can the student continue to see their current therapist via telehealth or phone?
    - If not, finding a new mental health provider near campus will be necessary
    - Physical Health: Does your student need OT/PT?
    - Medical Specialists
  - Will your insurance cover out of state providers?
- Transfer of care
  - Identify care providers ahead of time
  - Connect with Doctors before or ASAP after committing

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Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policies

Vary from college to college

- Check the Student Handbook

Types of Leave:

- Medical
- Personal
- Re-entry policy

Withdrawal:

- Sometimes retroactive
- Deadlines
- Financial implications

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Essential Skills

- **Talk about your disability:** The key here is for the students to be able to discuss their disability in a way that you are comfortable with. The more the student talks about it, the easier it gets.
- **Know your needs:** Take the time to look at all areas of the students life (eating, sleeping, school and social activities). What are the need in order to make those things work smoothly? Make a list and share it with someone to talk through it.
- **Prepare:** Things may not always work out perfectly. Work on plans and strategies so that when things don't go as planned, you can react effectively.

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Steps to Success

- **Start transition planning early!**
- Executive Function Skills: Planning, Organizing, Self-monitoring
  - Medication management
  - Healthcare appointments
  - Conversations with healthcare providers and university administrators
- Support students in developing independent living skills while they live at home

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Timeline-Junior Year

General Timeline

Sept-Nov

- ACT/SAT prep
- Learn about/tour colleges

Dec-Feb

- ACT/SAT
- Speak w/ college reps
- Scholarships

March-May

- ACT/SAT
- AP Exams

June-Aug

- Visit colleges
- Draft essay
- Interview prep
- Recommendations letters
- Outline financial aid/needs

Disability Considerations

- College accommodations
- Support program?
- Outline needs
  - Personal Care
  - Healthcare
- Tours-Accessibility
- Questions for DSO
- Communicating with the DSO
- Healthcare/Medication Management
- Disability Disclosure
- Disability scholarships
- Summer programs

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Timeline-Senior Years

General Timeline

Sept-Nov

- Retake SAT/ACT
- Revise essay
- Gather application materials
- Submit Early Decision
- Prepare CSS profile for FAFSA

Dec-Feb

- Response on ED
- Submit regular decision applications
- Submit FAFSA

March-May

- Update FAFSA
- Response on regular decision
- Compare aid packages
- Commit to a school
- AP exams

Disability Considerations

- Deadlines for support program applications
- Continuing communication with the DSO
- Disability Documentation
- Comparing colleges
- Applying for accommodations once committed
- Continuity of care
- Hiring PCA
- Parents: HIPAA, FERPA, Legal Docs
- Supporting students in the transition

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Support and Resources

- College search: finding the right academic and culture fit
  - High school counselor
  - Independent college consultant
- Accommodations, preparation, continuity of care
  - Accessible College: college search, college selection, college transition
  - Blog, monthly newsletter, social media
  - Facebook Group: "College Success: Physical Disabilities, Chronic Health & Mental Health"
- Accessible College Partnership with the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
  - Limited number of FREE session with Accessible College available to students with any type of paralysis who are considering college.

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