

“Don’t give up” The Next Step



The Next Step

Discussion and Video Guide on Higher Education



TEXAS COUNCIL *for*
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

*“It was my first
taste of real independence.”*



The Next Step Video Guide



Since 1990, there has been a significant increase in the number of students with disabilities attending college and other higher education sites. Despite this, many students with disabilities are not encouraged to pursue education after high school and expand their career choices. “The Next Step” is a 19-minute motivational video that challenges students, families and educators to consider higher education for individuals with disabilities. The video presents the personal stories of five Texans with disabilities who enrolled in a college, university or technical/trade school.

“The Next Step” features the following individuals.



Bobby Gruner graduated from Texas A&M University with a bachelor's degree in communication and a minor in business. He lives in Dallas and owns two businesses in the fields of mortgages and car sales.



Hilda Nino has an associate's degree in social work from The University of Texas at Brownsville. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology. She participates in a support group for parents of children with visual impairments, mentors students with visual impairments learning to use computers, and is a camp facilitator for youth with visual impairments.



Kenny Rogers graduated from the Art Institute of Dallas with an associate's degree in video production. He does freelance film work and has worked on two feature films. Kenny has been a national speaker on children's mental health issues.



Trenell Walker received a bachelor's degree from the University of North Texas and is pursuing a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. He hopes to gain employment in that field and to also become an assistive technology practitioner.



Sarah Whitlock earned a master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of Houston-Clear Lake and a bachelor's in psychology from Texas A&M University. She is a motivational speaker and promotes disability awareness. Sarah is forming a non-profit counseling and research organization related to people with disabilities.

“The Next Step” is a free video available on VHS, DVD and the Internet at <http://www.txddc.state.tx.us>. A “Resource Guide on Higher Education for People with Disabilities” is also on the Internet site. The video can be downloaded and copied. The video is closed captioned for people who are deaf or hearing impaired and includes some audio description for people who are blind or have visual impairments. A Spanish version (spoken, with closed captioning) is also provided. The video was produced by AMS Productions in Austin. “The Discussion and Video Guide” was produced by The Loomis Agency in Dallas.



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Discussion Guide



The Next Step: What to Look for in This Video

Now, more than ever, students with disabilities have access to educational resources, supports and accommodations that allow them to move beyond their high school education and prepare for a career. While more students are going to college, compared to their peers, few students with disabilities consider a community college, university, or technical school as an option. “The Next Step” is a 19-minute motivational film intended to raise expectations of students, parents and educators to seriously consider higher education for students with disabilities. The video shares the stories of five determined students who recognized the value of a good education and pursued their goals – sometimes with support from others and sometimes forging ahead on their own. These students also encourage other individuals with disabilities to gain higher education and expand their career choices.

“The Next Step” video and this “Discussion Guide” can assist you in expanding expectations so more students with disabilities:

- Choose educational and career opportunities beyond high school
- Identify basic elements in planning for higher education
- Become “self-determined” and take the lead in pursuing their desire to continue their education
- Broaden their expectations so that they explore careers that require a higher education

I. Reaching Beyond the Label and Presumptions about Disability

A. Each student in the video has a different disability. Some are physical and easy to see, while others are not obvious. One of the first hurdles is dealing with assumptions about people with disabilities and dispelling fears. Labels often focus on what people cannot do, rather than looking at abilities and building on them. The film reflects on the students’ initial fears of acceptance, survival and failure. A negative attitude by the individual or people around them can be the biggest barrier to success.

B. Action Item – Group discussion/exercise. See next page.

Discussion Guide

Identify each of the students, and answer the questions below:

1) What overall impression do you have of this student? Write down or explain in one or two words how you think they feel.	
TRENELL	SARAH
KENNY	BOBBY
HILDA	

2) Does this student have a mental, physical or hidden disability? It could be more than one.	
TRENELL	SARAH
KENNY	BOBBY
HILDA	

3) In the beginning of the video, what major fears or concerns did this student express?	
TRENELL	SARAH
KENNY	BOBBY
HILDA	

4) By the end of the video, what did you learn from the student?	
TRENELL	SARAH
KENNY	BOBBY
HILDA	

Teacher's/Leader's Notes*

- Trenell: Paralysis; had to learn how to do things all over again; feared being a burden.
- Kenny: Asperger's Syndrome; feared he would have minimal skills.
- Hilda: Visual impairment; as migrant farmers, family had no information.
- Sarah: Cerebral palsy; no one else is going to do everything for me.
- Bobby: Dyslexia; didn't want people to find out about his learning differences.

* Each student had a variety of feelings and experiences. To help with discussion, you may want to copy and pass out the "Video Guide" flyer so individuals can refer to it.

II. Planning for a Higher Education

- A. Education starts as soon as we are born and is a lifelong process! It never stops!
However, messages that students with disabilities and their parents receive about what the individual can learn and do are often confusing and conflicting. With progress in education, the protections of Section 504, the ADA and IDEA, and the expectation to be contributing members of the community, more people with disabilities can pursue higher education and expand their career choices.
- B. Action Item – Exercise:
Each of the students in the video approached his/her educational goals differently. They also had different kinds of personal, financial, or professional/paid support available to them through family, friends, staff or teachers. While some students are very shy, others are very assertive and outgoing. All of these factors are essential elements in making a decision to gain a higher education.

Participants can work in small groups to discuss and explore differences in the students.
Answer the questions below:

1. What were the reasons the students wanted to go to college or a trade school?
2. What do you think the students will do once they finish school?
3. Identify a student and something about his/her disability that requires an accommodation to attend college.
4. When the students needed supports for college, who provided the supports?
What supports and accommodations did they get?
 - a) Personal and family supports
 - b) Teachers or other school staff
 - c) Professional, agency or paid supports
 - d) Other students, friends or non-paid supports
 - e) Organizations
5. What resources are available on a college campus?
6. How can students with disabilities and their parents find out about educational opportunities beyond high school?
 - a) Teachers
 - b) Counselors
 - c) Friends
 - d) Family
 - e) Videos, brochures, TV commercials, posters, bulletin boards, surfing the Web/Internet etc.

III. Pursuing Personal Goals and Self-Determination

- A. Self-determination is a person's ability to make decisions about who they are, what they do, and what is important in their life. Self-determination allows individuals to have control and responsibility for how they obtain and use resources, as well as how they live. The nature of disabilities and the service system can reduce individuals' opportunities to be self-determined. Educational and adult service systems can limit an individual's freedom if they reinforce routines or expectations that cause dependency.

Self-advocacy is a person's skills that give them a "voice" in all of the decisions that are made that impact their life. For instance, Hilda advocated for herself when she said, "I began to realize that not speaking up was affecting my grades. So that's when I began to gather the courage and started speaking up for myself."

Young people with disabilities can be better self-advocates when they have more information about their disability, what kind of accommodations work for them and how to seek out support when needed.

Advocates assist others to realize their goals. There are usually a few good advocates in everyone's life, and many times it starts with their parents. Susan Rogers is a good example of a parent advocate for her son, Kenny.

B. Action Item – Exercise:

The students in this video have developed skills to communicate and pursue life goals. They also used their family and student networks to identify important people who could assist them, without taking away their dignity and respect.

1. Which student(s) in the video showed good self-advocacy skills?
2. What characteristics or skills did the student(s) exhibit?
3. Did any of the students receive help from another person? Who helped?
4. Describe what self-advocacy means to you and give one example where you advocated for something that you needed.
5. Prior to attending college, did the students know about their own disability and the supports they needed to be successful in school?

C. Action Item – Group discussion/exercise:

Ask the students/participants to consider how they are alike and different from the people in the video. What types of work or careers might interest them/their student(s)? What types of training or higher education would help students obtain work they would enjoy?

The Next Step —*Discussion and Video Guide*

While the need for a skilled work force and opportunities for higher education continue to grow, relatively few students with disabilities consider attending a community college, university, or trade/technical school. “The Next Step” is a motivational video and guide that encourages students, parents, educators, and others to seriously consider higher education for individuals with disabilities. If you want to improve the future, “The Next Step” is a great start!

Secondary Teachers, Counselors and Vocational Adjustment Coordinators



The Next Step: Turning Possibilities into Realities

While students often talk and wonder about what they are going to do after high school, many do not receive the encouragement or supports needed to reach their full potential or prepare for higher education. This is especially true for individuals with disabilities. Entry requirements, costs and the demands of higher education pose a challenge for all students, and it is very important for students with special needs to plan ahead and learn how to reach their educational goals. We invite you to watch the “The Next Step” video and consider educational opportunities that are available for students with disabilities after high school. In the video, five young adults with disabilities share their stories and lessons they learned by applying for and becoming successful in a college or technical school. The video offers a good springboard for discussion regarding various educational options, such as attending a community college, university, technical/trade school or other specialized training site. You can use the “Video Guide,” “Discussion Guide” and the basic steps provided below to help students explore possibilities and guide them toward success.

There are six steps in this guide:

- 1) Teach Students to Understand their Needs and Ask for Help
- 2) Teach Independence
- 3) Attendant Care
- 4) Graduation Considerations and Course Selection
- 5) Applying for Higher Education
- 6) Special Option to Extend High School Education

First Step: Teach Students to Understand their Needs and Ask for Help

- Do the students understand their disabilities?
- Do the students maintain a healthy self-image regardless of the challenges posed by their disability?
- Can they explain their disability and the supports they need?
- Do students know and understand the difference between accommodations and modifications?
- Can the students explain how these support their achievements?

Higher Education Expectations for Students with Disabilities:

- College students are expected to self-identify their disability and provide documentation of the disability to the school’s office of disability services. Some schools accept the most recent Full Individual Evaluation from the high school as sufficient documentation. Other schools require additional tests at the student’s own expense.
- In most schools, students with disabilities are expected to explain to each instructor the specific accommodations they need.

Secondary Teachers, Counselors and Vocational Adjustment Coordinators

Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills:

- Teach students how to disclose their disabilities to others and how to explain their needs and request accommodations.
- It is important for students to understand that they receive special education services rather than think of themselves in terms of the label, “special education student.”
- Allow students to practice their skills in asking for what they need to succeed, and expect the students to attend Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD)/Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings. As students become older, they should take a more active part in the ARD/IEP process. By the time students are high school seniors, they can provide input on goals, objectives, accommodations, modifications and transitional activities.
 - Before an ARD/IEP meeting, explain what will be discussed and obtain the student’s input. It may help to write down suggestions so there is a more comfortable level of sharing at the meeting.
 - If for some reason the student does not attend the meeting, share the discussions and decisions immediately following the meeting.
 - Remember, the purpose of the meeting is to develop an Individual Education Program, not a Parent Education Program or a Teacher Education Program.

Second Step: Teach Independence

- Teach the students how to ask for help when it is needed.
- Work with students who have difficulty in being organized, turning in assignments on time, and keeping an assignment notebook to develop accommodations needed to accomplish their schoolwork.
- Allow students access to tutoring through general education.
- Ensure students have opportunities to make decisions throughout the day.
- Ensure students are learning the skills needed to set goals, develop a plan of action, monitor the plan and achieve success. Practice a note taking system such as Cornell Notes.
- Ensure students have opportunities to schedule their own time, make their own decisions and provide input in choosing classes.

Higher Education Expectations for All Students:

- Instructors expect students to be prepared for class. They do not give reminders to complete activities.
- Instructors assume that students understand unless they ask for clarification or assistance. Instructors have specific office hours, and students are expected to make appointments during that time.
- Students must manage their own time. A rule of thumb is that for every hour of class, there are three hours of studying time.
- Students are expected to follow a syllabus for each class.
- Only two or three tests may be given during a semester, and students are expected to track their own progress.
- Students are their own “guardian.” College advisors and instructors are not allowed to talk to parents without the student’s consent.

Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills:

- Teach students how to break large assignments down into smaller tasks.
- Teach and grade students on how to use assignment notebooks.
- If homework reminders are given, remind students to check the notebook.
- Have students schedule time to go to tutoring.
- Self-determination starts at home as well as school. Share self-determination strategies with parents so you provide consistent instruction with common goals.

Third Step: Attendant Care

Higher Education Expectations for Students with Disabilities:

- Students who use attendant care should be involved in scheduling and directing the care.
- Students are expected to find their own attendant care, develop their own schedule of care and pay for this care. Very few institutions of higher learning help arrange attendant care.

Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills:

- Ensure the student is involved in scheduling and directing care.
- Instead of assigning one person to provide care, rotate staff so the student has the chance to instruct attendants and get used to a variety of caregivers.
- Teach the student how to instruct the attendant.

Fourth Step: Graduation Considerations and Course Selection

- Modifying a student's instruction from the state curriculum and standards can affect the academic foundation needed for some types of higher education. While modifications during high school may not affect technical and trade schools, they can cause problems in being accepted by and succeeding in a college.
- Is the student exempt from state exit requirements? Is the student graduating through the IEP or by taking the required courses and passing the state exit test?
- Is the general curriculum modified to such an extent that the course has become a special education course?
- Is the student following the correct graduation plan to attend post-secondary schools?
Is the student aware of the courses required to enter higher education?

Higher Education Expectations for Students with Disabilities:

- Students who are exempt from the state exit requirements may still have to pass an eligibility assessment to attend a post-secondary school. This may include SAT, ACT or specific placement tests. Students with disabilities can request accommodations on these tests. Documentation of disability may be required prior to test registration.

Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills:

- Allow students to participate in as much of the general curriculum as possible.
- Allow the dignity of risk and have students take the state assessment. If they are not successful, help them self-discover methods to improve skills.
- Before high school, explain the graduation requirements to the students so that they know what is necessary to enter higher education. Help students verify that they take the correct courses to meet admission requirements.

Fifth Step: Applying for Higher Education

- Selecting a career path and school are challenging for all students, as well as navigating the admission process, costs and demands of higher education. Individuals with disabilities, like other students, need assistance in applying for higher education to ensure that they get accepted at a school that will meet their needs while preparing them for a career they can be successful in and enjoy.
- In the process of exploring different types of schools and training, help students find out about services for people with disabilities at the schools being considered and how to obtain accommodations.
- Be sure students obtain the documentation regarding their disability that is needed to get accommodations. Some schools will accept the last Full Individual Evaluation from high school while others require additional tests at the student's expense.
- If a student cannot meet all admission requirements, find out if a school can waive the requirement. On the other hand, some technical schools have no entrance requirements other than high school graduation.
- In addition to exploring regular sources of financial aid, consider special funding sources for people with disabilities, including assistance through the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

Final Step: Special Option to Extend High School Education

Students in special education have the option to continue their education past the normal graduation date. By continuing to attend high school classes, students can increase their knowledge base and study skills. Some students are able to attend community college classes while still receiving some special education support from the school district. This provides college credit and experience while helping to decrease the cost of education. High school counselors, vocational adjustment coordinators, teachers and other professionals can help students and their families explore the different options and make the best decision about extending their time in high school.

Additional Resources

There are many resources to help students choose a career and appropriate school or training. The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities has created a free guide entitled "Resource Guide on Higher Education for People with Disabilities," which is updated on a regular basis. The guide is available on the Internet at <http://www.txddc.state.tx.us> under Resources, by contacting the Council at 1-800-262-0334 or by e-mail to TCDD@tcdd.state.tx.us.

Elementary Teachers



The Next Step: Building Foundations for Higher Education

You may wonder why this video is being targeted to elementary teachers. As teachers and students watch the video, “The Next Step,” they will meet five individuals with disabilities who are reaching their goals and obtaining a higher education. As elementary students start to think about their futures and the possibility of going to college, they will need guidance to know the steps to take toward higher education. You can begin the guidance process in elementary school. As you know, elementary school provides both academic and attitudinal foundations needed for advanced learning. It is important to help students increase their abilities and therefore not give them work that is too easy. This is a good time to encourage students to think ahead, challenge themselves and develop the skills necessary for productive, self-determined lives in the community.

Understanding the Disability

- Do the students understand their disabilities?
- Do the students maintain a healthy self-image regardless of the challenges posed by their disabilities?
- Can they explain their disability and the supports that they need?
- Do older students know and understand how the accommodations and modifications in their educational program help them to achieve an education?

Higher Education Expectations for Students with Disabilities:

- College students are expected to self-identify and provide documentation of their disabilities. Some schools accept the latest testing done in the public schools.
- Students are expected to identify their specific instructional needs to each teacher.

Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills:

- Explain eligibility for special education services in a way that is understandable to students. This may be as simple as acknowledging with the students that they have a disability which causes them to need specific accommodations or modifications to do well in school.
- It is important to refer to children as “students who receive special education services ” instead of labeling them as “special education students.” Also demystify the stigma of receiving special education services.
- In fourth through sixth grade, invite students to attend portions of the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD)/Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings and ask for input on what accommodations and modifications they may need.

Teach Independence

- Teach the students how to ask for help.
- Work with students who have difficulty in being organized, turning in assignments on time, and keeping an assignment notebook to develop accommodations needed to accomplish their schoolwork.
- Allow students access to tutoring through general education.
- Ensure students have opportunities to practice decision-making throughout the day.
- Ensure students are learning the skills needed to set goals, develop a plan of action, monitor the plan and achieve success.

Higher Education Expectations for Students with Disabilities:

- Instructors assume students understand unless they seek more clarification or request help.
- Students are expected to be prepared for class and to do assignments without being reminded.
- Students must manage their own time.

Elementary Teachers

Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills:

- Offer indirect verbal prompts so students learn to ask for help rather than offering help to a student before being asked. (Example: If a student seems perplexed say, “If you need help, I am here to help. Just ask me.”)
- Praise students for asking for help.
- Teach students to break large assignments into smaller tasks.
- Use individual assignment notebooks in daily work.
- Remind students to look at their assignment notebooks rather than giving direct reminders of assignments.
- Provide opportunities for making choices. (Example: Assign several tasks with a schedule so students understand the requirements. Allow the students to determine in what order they each want to do the tasks.)
- Teach goal-setting by having students learn to set small goals. When a goal is not attained immediately, it becomes a teaching opportunity to help students realize they can alter their goals or achieve them in another way.
- Self-determination and making choices starts at home as well as at school. Share self-determination strategies with your students’ parents. Consider sending the video home with the parents guide or showing it at school meetings.

Test Considerations

- Students’ access to higher education may be limited or even denied if the general curriculum is modified to such an extent that they do not learn the essential knowledge and skills of the course.

Higher Education Expectations for Students with Disabilities:

- Students with disabilities who apply to colleges and universities are generally required to take the same entrance examinations as other applicants. These tests may include SAT, ACT or specific placement tests. When applying for tests, students with disabilities may request that accommodations be made during testing. Documentation of disability may be required prior to test registration.

Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills:

- Prepare students to participate in as much of the general curriculum as possible.
- Allow students the dignity of risk, encouraging students to take the state assessment, as appropriate.
- Recognize that as a student’s instruction is altered from the state curriculum and standards, he is missing instruction and knowledge that may be needed to access higher education.

Attendant Care

- Students who have attendant care should have the opportunity to instruct the school staff on when and how the attendant helps them.

Higher Education Expectations for Students with Disabilities:

- Students are expected to find their own attendant care, develop their own schedule of care and pay for this care. Very few institutions of higher learning help to arrange attendant care.

Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills:

- As attendant care is being provided, ask the student for his opinion on how care should be given.
- Instead of assigning one person to provide care, rotate staff so the student has the chance to instruct attendants and get used to a variety of caregivers.
- Teach the student how to instruct the attendant.



The Next Step: Expanding Dreams and Expectations

While parents often wonder about what their children will do after high school, many students do not receive the information, encouragement or supports needed to reach their full potential. This is especially true for individuals with disabilities. We invite you to watch “The Next Step” video and to consider the educational opportunities available for your child after high school. In the video, you will meet five young adults with disabilities who decided to attend a college or technical school and then worked to be admitted. These students share their stories and lessons they learned.

More Students with Disabilities Are Attending Higher Education

Since 1990, there has been a significant increase in the number of students with disabilities in higher education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, almost 10 percent of college undergraduates from 1999–2000 had a disability that created difficulties for them as a student. About half attended community colleges. Another 26 percent attended public four-year schools.

Looking Ahead

While students need to make the final decision to get a higher education, parents can help in the decision-making and planning processes. Higher education can increase your child’s independence, job opportunities and choices, knowledge and income.

- Learn about educational options. Share what you learn with your child while encouraging and supporting your child.
- Talk with your child about his or her career goals and educational options, such as attending a technical or trade school, community college or university.
- Encourage students to set and follow their own goals, increasing their independence.

The Next Steps: Start Now

It’s never too soon to start planning for higher education. The better prepared you are, the easier it will be. Entry requirements, costs and demands of higher education pose a challenge for all students.

- Plan ahead on how to pay for higher education. Also be aware that there are many sources of financial aid such as scholarships or assistance through the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).
- Help your child develop good study habits and meet the requirements for the type of school desired.
- Texas has a variety of high school graduation plans that require different classes. Understand that modifying a student’s instruction from the state curriculum and standards can affect admission into some types of schools. While modifications made in high school may not affect technical and trade schools, they can interfere with being accepted by and succeeding in a college. Sometimes a college will waive an admission requirement.
- Students who are exempt from the state exit requirements may still have to pass an eligibility assessment for higher education. This may include SAT, ACT or specific placement tests. Documentation of disability may be required prior to test registration.

Parents

Choosing a Career Path and School; Preparing for Higher Education; Accommodations

The companion guide in this series for students, “The Next Steps: To Dream. To Learn. To Achieve,” covers several topics that are also important for parents. These include “Choosing a Career Path and Selecting a School,” “Obtaining Accommodations in Higher Education,” and “Steps in Preparing for Higher Education.” The guides for teachers may also be helpful. Key points from the student’s guide include:

- Have your child take **vocational interest and aptitude tests** that provide guidance on careers that he or she is most likely to be successful in and enjoy.
- Consider if the career goal requires **certification or a degree** from a trade or technical school, college or university.
- Think about what **type of educational setting** will work best for your child.
- If possible, **visit schools** that seem to best meet your child’s needs. Pick the top choices and help your child apply to them.
- Contact the school’s **office of disability services** and ask about **accommodations**. Provide documentation of the disability. Some schools will accept the last Full Individual Evaluation from high school; others require additional tests at the student’s expense. Students are usually responsible for talking with instructors about accommodations they need.
- Review your child’s Individual Education Program (IEP), learn about any accommodations in high school and determine if courses were modified. Do not allow your child to be given an IEP or work that is too easy, so that the student does not obtain the academic and attitudinal foundations needed for advanced learning. Include transition planning in the IEP by age 16.
- Ensure older children attend Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD)/IEP meetings to understand what supports may be needed. Invite your student to explain his disability and accommodations needed to practice advocating for himself.

Special Option: Continuing Education through the Local School District

- Students in special education have the option of continuing their high school education past their normal graduation date. By continuing to attend high school classes, students can increase their knowledge base and study skills.
- Some students are able to attend community college classes while still receiving some special education support from the school district. This provides college credit and experience while helping to decrease the cost of education.
- Your child’s vocational adjustment coordinator can also help in exploring different options.

A Few Final Notes

- In higher education, students are expected to manage their own time, be prepared for class and track their own progress. Instructors assume students understand unless they ask for clarification or assistance. Instructors have specific office hours, and students are expected to make appointments during that time.
- A student is his own “guardian.” College advisors and instructors are not allowed to talk to parents without the student’s consent.
- There are many resources to help students choose a career and prepare for higher education, such as teachers, counselors, libraries and the Internet. You may also contact the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities for a free “Resource Guide on Higher Education for People with Disabilities.” The guide is also on the Council’s Web site at <http://www.txddc.state.tx.us> under Resources.

Students



The Next Steps: To Dream. To Learn. To Achieve.

As you look ahead to the future, graduating from high school and getting a job, you may want to think about continuing your education at a community college, university or trade/technical school. There are many ways to further your education and expand your career choices. There are also many steps to prepare for higher education, such as making sure you take all classes and tests that are needed to enter the school you choose and obtaining financial aid. While colleges have specific admission requirements, sometimes they can make exceptions. On the other hand, some technical schools have no entrance requirements other than high school graduation.

Choosing a Career Path and Selecting a School

Here are some things to consider in selecting a career and school. Information is also available from your school counselor, vocational adjustment coordinator, libraries and on the Internet.

- Have you taken vocational interest and aptitude tests that offer some ideas about careers you might be successful in and enjoy?
- Have you discussed your career ideas with your family, friends, teachers and counselor?
- Have you added your career goals to your transition plan?
- Does your work goal require certification or a degree from a trade or technical school, college or university?
- What type of educational setting will work best for you and meet your needs?
- Factors to consider in selecting a school include:
 - School accreditation
 - School location
 - Admission requirements
 - Availability and qualifications of tutors
 - Availability of credit or noncredit classes to assist with study skills and other basic skills, such as writing, math and how to manage classwork
 - Services and supports for students with disabilities, both on and off campus
 - Availability of counselors, including help with registration, orientation, and course selection
 - Whether students can take fewer classes per semester if they need extra time to meet course objectives (Some classes can be taken in the summer or by going to school longer.)
 - If the atmosphere and size of the school/classes are comfortable to you
 - Quality of extracurricular and recreational activities
 - Price of tuition plus room and board
 - Scholarships and other financial assistance available (including possible assistance through the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services [DARS])
- If possible, visit the schools that seem to best meet your needs. See if you can sit in on a class as a prospective student. Pick your top choices, find out what they require for admission and submit your applications.

Obtaining Accommodations in Higher Education

- Many students who have disabilities graduate successfully from trade or technical schools, community colleges and universities. One of the first steps is to contact the school's office on disability services. Tell them about your disability and accommodations you need to succeed. You have to provide documentation of your disability. Some schools accept the latest Full Individual Evaluation from your high school. Other schools require you to take additional tests at your own expense. Ask about disability advocacy groups, occupational and physical therapy clubs, and getting a mentor.

Students

- Higher education programs can provide accommodations to help you learn, but they require that you master the same information/curriculum as other students.
- In most higher education settings, you are responsible for talking with your instructors about your disability and the accommodations you need.
- Some common accommodations are:
 - Having extra time on tests
 - Sitting in a particular place in the room
 - Having materials in Braille or large print
 - Having a note taker or being allowed to tape-record lectures

Steps in Preparing for Higher Education

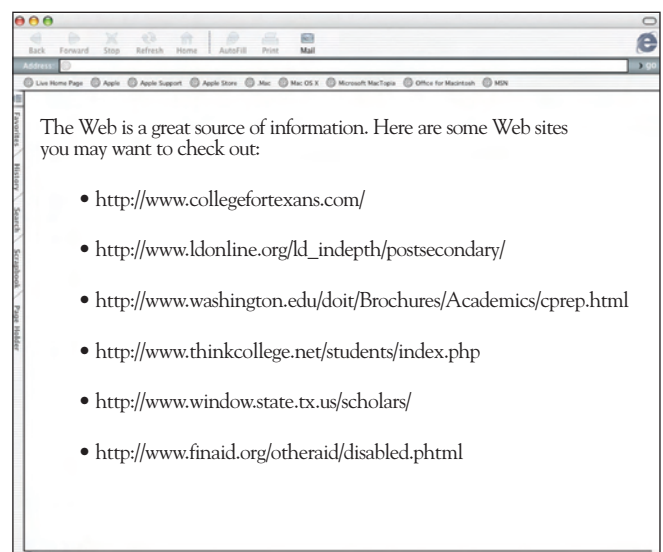
- Review your current Individual Education Program (IEP) with the teachers and/or counselors in the special education department to find out about any accommodations you receive in high school. Also determine if your class curriculum/courses have been modified.
- Request a copy of your Full Individual Evaluation and your current IEP.
- Attend your IEP meetings to learn about supports you need.
- Practice explaining your disability and accommodations to a high school teacher(s) so you will be more comfortable doing this after you graduate.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of your study skills, and work to improve them.
- Practice a note taking system such as Cornell Notes.

Special Option: Continuing Your Education through the Local School District

- Students in special education have the option of continuing their high school education past their normal graduation date. By continuing to attend high school classes, students can increase their knowledge base and study skills.
- Some students are able to attend community college classes while still receiving some special education support from the school district. This provides college credit and experience while helping to decrease the cost of education.
- If you are interested in extending your time in high school, talk with your parents, teachers, guidance counselor and/or vocational adjustment coordinator. Together you can evaluate which educational path offers the best benefits.

Additional Resources

There are many resources to help students choose a career and an appropriate school. Check with your guidance counselor, vocational adjustment coordinator, school library and the Internet for more information. You may also contact the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities for a free guide entitled "Resource Guide on Higher Education for People with Disabilities." The guide is updated regularly on the Council's Web site at <http://www.txddc.state.tx.us> under Resources.



The Next Step Vocabulary



Accommodations

Supports that assist a student in meeting the requirements of a task. May include, but are not limited to, taking tests in a quiet area, having more time to take tests, tutoring, technology, adapted equipment, minor changes in scheduling, or personal supports. Specific examples in the video include the note taker and large-print textbooks.

ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Passed by Congress to protect the rights of persons with disabilities from discrimination in employment, state and local government programs/services, and public accommodations.

Attendant Care

Paid and unpaid assistance needed by individuals with a physical disability for daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, feeding and grooming.

Autism, Asperger's and Pervasive Developmental Disorder

Neurological disorders characterized by delays in the development of socialization and communication skills that affect an individual's ability to use and understand language, play and relate to others. Abilities, intelligence and behaviors vary widely for different individuals.

Cerebral Palsy

A permanent condition that results in the loss of voluntary muscular control and coordination, including the ability to move and to maintain balance and posture. Results from damage to the developing brain before, during or up to five years after birth. There are many different forms, and its severity is dependent on the extent of the brain damage. It is not a disease. Usually does not worsen over time.

Developmental Disability

A disability that results from a mental or physical impairment, begins before age 22, results in major limitations in everyday functioning (see "disability") and is likely to be lifelong.

Disability

A physical, mental, emotional or sensory impairment that results in major limitations in everyday functioning (self-care, language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living and economic self-sufficiency) and reflects a student's needs for special services that are individually planned and coordinated.

Hidden Disability

Disabilities that do not have a physical characteristic easily seen by others, such as learning, cognitive and mental disabilities, etc.

Higher Education

See Post-Secondary Education.

Housing

The living arrangement for an individual including, but not limited to, location, physical modifications and supports.

IDEA

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Federal law that mandates a "free appropriate public education" for eligible children with disabilities (including mental, physical and emotional disabilities) who, because of their disability, require accommodations and/or modifications to learn. Applies to youth in public schools through age 21.

Medicaid/Medicare

State and federal insurance programs that help pay doctor, hospital and other medical bills for eligible children and adults with disabilities. Connected to Social Security Benefits/eligibility.

The Next Step Vocabulary

Modifications

Adjustments that change a class's instructional level, content and/or performance criteria, that are agreed to by the ARD committee. Examples for a student with a significant cognitive disability are simplifying the curriculum, testing for a lower level of understanding, and/or putting fewer questions on the test.

Office of Students with Disabilities

Staff at most community colleges and universities who can assist students in being successful, which includes obtaining resources for accommodations and other community supports. Many services are free, but some schools charge for extra services. Schools that accept federal funding are required to serve students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Personal Network

Family, friends, acquaintances and paid staff an individual relies on to be involved and successful in the community.

Post-Secondary Education

Typically considered education at a community college, college or university. Also includes training in technical/trade schools, adult continuing education or other community classes.

Section 504

Refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This civil rights law guarantees people with disabilities equal access to federally supported programs, services and housing, including public schools. Colleges receiving federal financial assistance – most colleges – cannot discriminate in recruitment, admission or treatment of students.

Self-Advocacy

Speaking up or taking action to protect your own rights, satisfy your interests and needs, and control your own life.

Social Security Benefits

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) provide monthly income for people with disabilities who meet the Social Security Administration's eligibility criteria. See <http://www.ssa.gov>.

Special Education

Education provided to children with disabilities whose abilities (physical, mental and social) and learning styles require alternative teaching methods or related support services to benefit from the educational program. The services are free for students in public schools, from age 3 through their 21st birthday.

Supported Living

A service organization that provides supports such as skills training, budgeting, transportation, shopping, recreation, etc., for individuals with disabilities living on their own.

Transition

Change or movement from one setting to another, such as school to adult life. Includes assistance with higher education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), adult services, independent living and community participation.

Transportation

Refers to personal, family, group, private, and publicly paid for or free transportation. It is especially important in planning for school, employment, medical appointments, everyday living tasks, and social and spiritual needs.

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD)

A 29-member board dedicated to ensuring all Texans with developmental disabilities, about 344,500 individuals, have the opportunity to be independent, productive and valued members of their communities. Using a variety of methods, TCDD works to ensure the service system provides comprehensive services and supports that meet people's needs, are easy to access and are cost-effective.

The Next Step



"The Next Step" will assist students with disabilities to:

- Form educational and career expectations beyond high school
- Increase their awareness of how to prepare for higher education
- Become "self-determined" in their desire and tenacity to continue their education

"The Next Step" will help parents to:

- Identify their child's needs for assistance to be successful in education and build on their individual strengths
- Encourage students to set their own goals and become more independent
- Assist students in exploring options and meeting admission requirements

"The Next Step" will help teachers and counselors to:

- Build the foundations and develop skills needed for higher education
- Assist students in identifying options and negotiating the admissions process
- Support students in developing self-advocacy skills

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