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DID YOU KNOW.....

No one at a university or technical institute can, or will, seek your child out because they think they may have a disability. Students with disabilities at the post-secondary level need to be able to self-identify and request accommodations. The skill of being able to explain your disability and to speak up for what you need is of the **utmost importance** to your child in being successful in the post-secondary education setting!

Transition services for students pursuing post-secondary education Tips For Parents

Whether your child is looking at attending a university or technical institute, it is important to know that students who have a disability **can and do** attend post-secondary education! Many students with disabilities have successfully completed postsecondary experiences and have wonderful careers.

Being well informed of services available at this level and planning ahead, can ensure that your child will have every opportunity to experience success in their post-secondary experience.

While in high school, your child should

- ✓ Attend all classes and keep grade point average up.
- ✓ Challenge themselves with rigorous courses in the general education setting.
- ✓ Set up a regular study schedule.
- ✓ Talk to their general education teachers about their learning styles and needed accommodations.
- ✓ Complete at least three high school math courses (algebra and above).
- ✓ Take ACT (American College Testing) or Accuplacer exams early in case you need to take them again to raise your score. ACT is required for university admissions; Accuplacer is typically required for technical institute admissions. Some scholarships require ACT scores, so it could be an incentive for one planning to attend a technical institute to take the ACT, rather than the Accuplacer.
- ✓ Tour and visit with disability services office at schools of interest.
- ✓ Attend Catch the Wave event.
- ✓ Address the possible need for accessing assistive technology (AT) devices. Regardless of what the disability is, there is probably an AT device that can assist your child.
- ✓ Apply for services through Division of Rehabilitation Services.



At the Post-Secondary level, did you know.....

- Disability Coordinators are available to assist students with needed services, but the student must take the initiative to make the request.
- Students can request accommodations for the ACT test or Accuplacer Test. Your student should talk with the special education teacher and/or school counselor to request testing accommodations.
- Due to FERPA regulations, college staff can't give out information to parents, unless the student signs a release.
- While in high school, students should be 'weaned away' from modifications. Modifications alter the content of a course or what is learned or tested, whereas, accommodations do not change the content but only change how content is learned or tested. Accommodations are provided at post-secondary level, not modifications!
- A student with a disability must meet the standards of the classes they take at a post-secondary institution. Standards are not lowered for students with disabilities.
- Self-identification and asking for assistance early can prevent failed grades, loss of financial aid and low self-esteem!
- Many of the programs offered through SD's technical institutes have admissions and performance expectations that are very similar to those at colleges and universities.
- Evaluations (including adult normed psychological) from high school need to be current (within 3 years) for services at post-secondary institutions.
- Students should continue with upper-level math courses during their senior year. That way they come to college with math 'fresh' in their mind.
- More and more students are taking longer to get their degrees. Smaller course loads are recommended for some students with disabilities. In colleges and universities, 12 credits is considered full-time for the purposes of federal financial aid.
- When leaving the high school environment, students should have experience in using personal assistive technology devices (if needed). To find more information on assistive technology, go to: <https://www.dakotalink.net/>.
- Students must manage their own time and schedules. Typically it is recommended students study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.
- Attendance policies may vary with each instructor. Instructors expect students to get the information from a fellow classmate when they miss a class.
- Tests and major papers generally provide the majority of the grade in a course. Rarely are extra credit options given to raise a grade.

Post-secondary educational institutes in South Dakota are committed to assistance and accommodations for qualified students with specific disabilities or needs. Universities, colleges and technical institutes receiving federal funds must designate a person to help students with disabilities to access accommodations. This person may be known as a 504 Coordinator, disability coordinator, or another similar title. The disability coordinator is a **KEY** player in helping students with disabilities be successful in pursuing their post-secondary education goal. For a list of disability coordinators at SD post-secondary institutions, refer to **Catch the Wave**, a booklet developed by the Transition Services Liaison Project, available at www.tslp.org.





The Power is in Self-Advocacy

When your child goes to college, you no longer have the ability to access their school records, or their grades without his/her written consent as per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For more information at — <https://www.collegeparentcentral.com/2009/06/what-ferpa-means-for-you-and-your-college-student/>

While it may be difficult to “let go” of this involvement, it can also be a chance to empower your child to be their own advocate – a skill that is crucial not only in college, but as they go through their life. Assisting your child in developing these advocacy skills while in high school cannot only alleviate your concerns about how they will deal with college, but will lessen the stress for him/her. High school students who regularly advocate for themselves while in high school are more comfortable with the “self advocacy concept” when they go off to college.

You can foster these skills by encouraging your child to attend and participate in their IEP meetings. Make sure your child understands the nature of their disability and how it impacts their learning. When they can express not only their learning challenges but their strengths, they can comfortably have a conversation with their college disability coordinator about their accommodation needs. Encourage them to communicate with their high school teachers on a regular basis as well – this will make it easier for students to approach their college instructors, since college students often have to initiate communication with faculty.

By practicing these skills while in high school, students with disabilities will be better prepared to independently advocate for themselves as they transition to college life.

Catch The Wave is a one-day training, held on a campus, designed specifically for high school students who have a disability and are considering post-secondary education (either a university or technical institute). The training is applicable to parents and teachers, also.

Students will learn about

- ◆ Preparing for college life,
- ◆ Securing appropriate accommodations and
- ◆ Importance of being a self-advocate.

Highlights of the one day training will be hearing from students now attending college who are receiving disability services at the post-secondary setting, as well as disability coordinators discussing entrance and eligibility requirements.

For dates and locations, contact the transition liaison in your area or go to the TSLP website at: www.tslp.org



Accommodations vs. Modifications

Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may receive classroom and/or testing accommodations or modifications. Even though these terms are used interchangeably, it is important to know the difference.

- Modification – a change in content or what is learned or tested.
- Accommodation - a change in how content is learned or tested.

Throughout high school, your child may have received modifications or accommodations. At the post-secondary level, accommodations are available, modifications are not.

Depending on their disability, students may receive these typical accommodations at the college level:

- ◇ Alternate Testing—alternate location for exams (quieter) and/or extended time for test taking
- ◇ Notetaking in class
- ◇ Alternate Print – books in audio format or in pdf form to use with assistive technology readers.

RECOMMENDATIONS: It is good for your child to ‘wean’ away from any modifications in high school and utilize only accommodations to better prepare for the post-secondary level.

What Can VR do for My Child ?



Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) & Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired (SBVI) provide individualized vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to assist eligible individuals with disabilities to reach their employment goals. For many individuals, employment goals are met following graduation from post-secondary education. If your child hasn't applied for these services while in high school, have them do so immediately.

There are a variety of services that DRS & SBVI can offer to students who are planning to pursue post-secondary education. The services that may be provided include:

- ◆ Assistance with transitional planning into adult world
- ◆ Vocational counseling and guidance to help understand capabilities and develop career goals
- ◆ Assistive technology devices needed for post-secondary education, training or employment
- ◆ Possible financial assistance for post-secondary education
- ◆ Transportation, equipment and other services if needed for post-secondary education
- ◆ Job placement services to include job development, job coaching and follow-up following post-secondary education.

For information on the address and phone number of the DRS office nearest you, go to <http://dhs.sd.gov/rehabservices/default.aspx> or call (605) 773-3195.

5 Top Predictors of Post-Secondary Education Success

- #1 • Understand disability and accommodations needed
- #2 • Willing to ask for help
- #3 • Make a personal connection with someone at college
- #4 • Participate in activities and events
- #5 • Carry a manageable course load

Final Thoughts

- ✓ Communication is essential - you and your child's IEP team need to begin the transition to post-secondary education early!
- ✓ College students with disabilities must be given an equal opportunity to benefit from the program (an opportunity comparable to that afforded non-disabled students), however;
- ✓ The law ensures *opportunity*; it doesn't ensure success.
- ✓ Successful college students take primary responsibility for accommodations, communication, and services.
- ✓ Assistance is available **IF** students ask for it!