

CHOOSING A POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL



Applying to a post-secondary school can be overwhelming for any student. For individuals with disabilities, the need for self-advocacy is especially important. Just because a student had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in school doesn't mean s/he will automatically receive services after graduation. It is important to find an environment that can provide both the support services and the academic programs students need.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

- What are your academic goals?
- What type of post-secondary school are you looking for? Do you want a two- or four-year school? Trade or vocational school? College or university? Public or private school?
- Where is your ideal post-secondary school location? Urban or rural? Local or in another state/region? Will your child commute from home or live on campus?
- What size school is best for you? Keep in mind: Smaller campuses may seem less overwhelming, but they may have fewer support services available than larger campuses.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act requires that schools make their programs accessible to qualified students with disabilities, the scope and availability of services vary from school to school. Thorough research is key to finding the right fit.

- Connect with the school's office for students with disabilities to see what services are available.
- Once a student discloses a disability, they are required to submit written requests for accommodations to the school along with proper documentation.

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DISABILITY SERVICES (cont.)

- Ask the school questions such as:
 - What documentation does each school require?
 - Are all required services free or fee based? Does the school have a health insurance program? If so, does it cover these services?
 - Who provides the services, and what are their credentials? How many specialists are on staff?
 - How many students with disabilities receive services at the school?
 - What is the school's policy for supporting students who are struggling academically?

OTHER SERVICES

Explore and take advantage of all available support services that could help relieve the stress of dealing with the college experience. These may include:

- Admissions assistance
- Financial aid assistance
- Mentoring and peer network programs
- Recreation and social programs
- Dormitory support
- Course auditing or online coursework
- Accommodations such as extended time or separate location for test taking, reduced course load, note-takers, etc.
- Educational support such as peer tutoring