Preparing Students with Disabilities for College: Helping Local and State Leaders Expect this Outcome!

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Open Doors to Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities
What is the continuum of postsecondary education (PSE) options to be considered?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate or Trade Schools</th>
<th>Technical College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-year College</td>
<td>4-year Independent College/University</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-year State College/University</td>
<td>College Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Basic Education Classes</td>
<td>Job Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Apprenticeships</strong></td>
<td>Military Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gap Years</td>
<td>Re-entry Programs (Interruptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Organizations (Americorps, VISTA)</td>
<td>Workforce Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and Professional Training Organizations</td>
<td>CTE</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Background

- According to Snyder de Brey, and Dillow (2016), the number of degree-seeking students with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education (PSE) during the 2013-2014 year included 12.9% of the total student population.

- Specific strategies, such as new types of testing situations (from high school), classroom instruction, social interactions, the need to organize thoughts, and knowing how their disability will affect them in college are identified as barriers to successful transition to PSE (Brinckeroff, McGuire, & Shaw, 2002; Janiga & Costenbader, 2002; Milsom & Hartley, 2005).
The door is open. Now, how do we move the needle?
A consensus in relevant literature suggests that effective transition to PSE must include person-centered goals and planning, high expectations, accessing resources of support, and collaboration with external partners (Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011; Öertle & Seader, 2015) in order to mitigate the challenge of adjusting both socially and intellectually to postsecondary settings (Mazzotti, Test, & Mustian, 2014; Parsons, 2017).

Successful planning includes self-determination in that the individual is able to make decisions and intentionally behave in a way that promotes self-sufficiency (Chou, Wehmeyer, Palmer, & Lee, 2017; Koegel, Navab, Ashbaugh, & Koegel, 2016).
Preparing for College: Plan Ahead!

- Start planning for college early and be prepared
- Inclusive education and access to curriculum
- Literacy skills (reading, writing, math)
- Foundational skills (e.g. self-determination, time management)
- Communications & social skills
- Paid jobs while in school
- Research & visit colleges
- IEPs & transition plans should reflect goals in these areas & postsecondary outcomes of college & work
Balance of Multiple Roles
- Persistence
- Responsibility
- Collaboration
- Independence
- Engagement

Background Factors (knowledge & affective)
- General and Specific Knowledge Content
- Family & Friends
- Culture
- Desire to learn
- Learning styles
- Social & Emotional Intelligence

Academic and Career Habits
- Persistence
- Use of resources
- Communication
- Quality of work
- Acceptance of direction and constructive criticism
- Technological know-how

Outcomes
- Meaningful credential
- Integrated, competitive employment
- Community membership
- Self-determination
- Life long learning

Cultural Know-how
- Commitment
- Respect
- Flexible attitude (or flexible thinking)
- Responsible risk-taking
- Interpersonal skills
- Curiosity

Self-Direction
- Communicates needs
- Anticipates needs
- Advocates for own needs
- Accesses health care
- Manages personal finances
## Foundational Skills & Characteristics

### Academic and Career Habits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and punctuality</td>
<td>Maintains current course and work schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gets to class and work on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of resources</td>
<td>Is aware of college supports (e.g., counseling, career, library)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses tutoring, coaching, mentoring, disability services as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communicates clearly and can make others understand their meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Checks for understanding such as asking clarifying questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicates w/ college faculty, supervisors, co-workers, residence hall staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once students are there, then what?

If we know there are differences between High School and PSE, what is needed to maximize student success?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laws</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Advocacy</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Role</td>
<td>Student Responsibilities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Different Demands between HS and PSE

- Time in class
- Class size
- Time required to prepare for class
- Frequency of tests
- Minimum grades required to remain in school
- Teaching practices
- Amount of freedom allowed to students
Challenges students face

- A decrease in teacher-student contact
- An increase in academic competition
- A change in personal support networks
- A loss of the protective public school environment
- Have trouble reading and evaluating available services
Target Groups to Provide Professional Development and Information Workshops

- Student Groups
- Parent Groups
- Community Organizations
  - Fraternities and Sororities
- School Professionals
  - Administrators, Teachers, Counselors, Social Workers, Related Service Personnel, PTSA, Advisory Boards, Staff
- Local Businesses
  - Chambers of Commerce
- Legislators
  - Lobbyists
- Churches and Religious Organizations
- PSE
  - Administrators, Faculty, Advisory Boards, and Staff
## Supports in PSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Resource Centers</th>
<th>Disability Resource Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ombudsman</td>
<td>Mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Instruction</td>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling and Mental Health Centers</td>
<td>Academic Advisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support Groups</td>
<td>Student Professional Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Centers</td>
<td>Living and Learning Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition and Fitness Centers</td>
<td>Health Centers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Are Your Partners?

- Institutions of Higher Education
- Professional Organizations
- SEDNET
- National Centers
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Financial Institutions
- Military
- State Agencies
DISCUSS AND SHARE OUT
Think College National Coordinating Center

Federally funded since 2010 to provide coordination, training & technical assistance to any college or university who wants to establish or improve postsecondary education opportunities for students with intellectual disability on their campus

www.thinkcollege.net
Definition of a Student with an Intellectual Disability:

A student—

(A) with a cognitive impairment,
characterized by significant limitations in—

(i) intellectual and cognitive functioning; and

(ii) adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; and

(B) who is currently, or was formerly, eligible for a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
Higher education programs for students with intellectual disability in the U.S. 2004 to 2019

See https://thinkcollege.net/college-search
College Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

- Have alternative admissions process & requirements – regular HS diploma not needed
- Accept students who are non-degree seeking
- Vary in length – most are 2-year, some 4-year
- Vary in levels of academic inclusion
- Established course of study that leads to certificate
- May offer federal student aid (not loans)
Creates the Comprehensive Transition Program

Provides access to Federal Financial Aid

Provides funding for model demonstration projects and a coordinating center

Requires development of model accreditation standards

Requires collection of program level and student level data

Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008
Financial Aid
(Grants & Work Study, not Loans)

▪ Student must meet definition of “intellectual disability” (ID)

▪ Student must be enrolled in approved Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP)

➢ IHEs must apply to US ED for CTP approval in order for students with ID to receive financial aid

➢ For list of approved programs: [https://studentaid.ed.gov/SA/eligibility/intellectual-disabilities](https://studentaid.ed.gov/SA/eligibility/intellectual-disabilities)

▪ Family must fill out FAFSA & meet financial need requirements
Since 2010, the TPSID initiative has supported the creation or expansion of...

- **93 programs** at **90 colleges and universities** serving almost **3,400 students with I/DD** across **31 states**.
AGE
90% Between 18–25 years old

DISABILITY
96% Either intellectual disability and/or autism
4% Autism (no intellectual disability)

GENDER
38% Female
62% Male

RACE/ETHNICITY
5% Asian
11% Hispanic
27% Black or African-American
59% White

ENROLLMENT STATUS
Dually enrolled: 18%
Adult student: 82%

TPSID Students 2017 - 2018
Options for Credentials

- Program creates a new credential that only their **students** earn.
  - Aligned with an industry-recognized credential
  - Certificate of completion of a program of studies

- Program creates a new credential that **all students** can earn

- Offer **access to an existing credential** already approved by and awarded by the IHE
COURSE ACCESS

Inclusive vs. specialized course enrollments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Inclusive Courses</th>
<th>Specialized Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TPSID Cohort Trend Data (2015 – 2018)

Changing Expectations. Increasing Opportunities.
Sample of Courses

**Academic:** Beginning American Sign Language II, Fundamentals of Writing, Writing for Children, Introduction to Sociology, World Civilization II, Pre-Algebra, Careers in Healthcare, American History to 1877, Introduction to Psychology

**Business:** Microcomputer Applications for Business, Principles of Advertising, Principles of Marketing, Principles of Management, Front Office Management, Hospitality Seminar

**Technology:** Advanced Microcomputer Applications, Web Page Development I & II, Intermediate Photoshop

**Arts:** Painting II, Ceramics I, Ballroom Dance, Latin Dance, Vocal Performance Workshop, Introduction to Watercolor, Write Your Life Story, Drawing I

**Career Exploration:** Professional Etiquette, Keys to Effective Communication, Criminal Procedure, Strategies for College and Career, Sanitation & Safety, Child Development, Response to Terrorism, Making Movies, Introduction to Mass Media, Career/Life Planning

**Wellness:** Personal Fitness, Introduction to Wellness, Swimming, Yoga I & II, Handling Medical Emergencies
STUDENT LIFE
EMPLOYMENT
EMPLOYMENT

- 47% Employed while in college
- 31% Received services from Vocational Rehabilitation
- 56% Never held a paid job prior to enrollment

TPSID DATA 2017-2018
Post-College Outcomes
65% (N=100) of those who completed a TPSID program had a paid job one year after exit.

In comparison, 17% of adults with developmental disabilities in the general population had a paid job in the community in 2014–2015*.

32% (N=49) were not working. These students reported they were doing other things such as...

- Looking for work (N=28)
- Attending postsecondary education at a non-TPSID program (N=19)
- Doing unpaid career development activities (N=25)

Source: National Core Indicators, 2017

* 2014–2015 is the most recent year for which data are available
satisfied or very satisfied with their social life

= 90.5% 🌟

(two students who did not answer this question)

In comparison, 40% of adults with developmental disabilities report feeling lonely.
How to Make Higher Education Happen for Students with ID
Finding the Right Fit

- Start with basics: size; geographic location; urban, rural, suburban, etc., housing
- Use thinkcollege.net database
- How to evaluate college programs for students with ID?
  - Has program been approved for financial aid?
  - Model Accreditation Standards Report
  - Think College Standards, Quality Indicators & Benchmarks
Finding the Right Fit:
What questions should we ask?

- Visit www.thinkcollege.net to read: *Conducting a College Search: Questions to Ask College Programs*
- Schedule a phone call to ask questions
- Schedule a college visit to see campus & meet staff, faculty, & students
- Visit disability services office to see how involved they are with program
- Connect with alumni & their families to learn about their experiences in college & what they’re doing now
Find a college that’s right for you!

Find and compare information about 263 college programs for students with intellectual disabilities! Search by program name, location, and other keywords. See "Advanced Search" for more options to help you narrow your search and build a list of schools that are a good match for you.

The information included here was submitted to Think College by the college programs. Being listed here does not indicate or imply a Think College endorsement. There also may be programs available that have not reported to us. All programs listed here must be affiliated with an accredited college or university and serve students with intellectual disabilities. To let us know about a new program, or to make changes to a current program listing, please email thinkcollege@umb.edu.
Student Experiences

What is a typical day like for students? Does each student have their own experience and schedule, or are the days similar for everyone?

Can students access everything on campus that other students can, for example, the library, the gym, and the student center? Are there any limits on what facilities they can use or activities they can do?

How does a student find out about and gain access to on-campus activities?

What are some typical things that students do when they have free time on campus?
DISCUSS
AND SHARE
OUT
Psychiatric and Mental Health in PSE?
What we know about TAY with mental health concerns

- TAY with mental health concerns often were served under IDEA as ED (SED, EBD), OHI, SLD, etc

- Prevalence rates are much higher than services rates
  - 75% of serious mental health disorders emerge by age 18

- Individuals frequently have symptoms before exiting secondary education

- These issues pose challenges to successfully transitioning to post-secondary settings
  - Executive functioning
  - Willingness (or lack) to engage campus resources
  - Symptom experience and medications
  - Concerns about stigma (desire to be “normal”)
What can we do?

• Equip students with skills we know all students need –BEFORE THEY EXIT SECONDARY SCHOOL

• Increase awareness of resources in the college setting and assist students with establishing these connections- BEFORE THEY EXIT SECONDARY SCHOOL

• Create a “hub” of resource information for parents/ students- BEFORE THEY EXIT SECONDARY SCHOOL
Equipping the students

- Executive functioning
  - “Calendaring”
  - Reading a syllabus and using it for planning and organization
- Planning for Resources
  - Preparation for access Disability Services on college campuses
- Self Directed IEP Transition Planning
  - Disability awareness
  - Self-advocacy
  - Embed needed skills in IEP Transition Goals
- Create a resource HUB
  - Senior Information for all students
  - Transition fairs
Making these connections....

BEFORE THEY EXIT SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Consider identifying partners in the community and establishing these connections during high school
- Create a master list of organizations and contact people/information for special educators and guidance counselors
- Host Transition Fairs
- Attend the content session for Improving Outcomes for Students with EBD: Professional Development in Two States
  - Tomorrow from 11:15 to 12:30, Practice Guides included!
- Compile a resource sheet for parents and TAY with helpful transition information
  - Transitions to Adulthood Research Center has a library of TIP sheets and other useful information
DISCUSS
AND SHARE
OUT
Available Resources

- NTACT PSE Toolkit
- Student College Resource Guide
- PACER Center postsecondary ed information for families
- Think College Foundation skills for College & Career Learning
- College Readiness and Career Success
- Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
The Think College Families Facebook page is a closed group that serves as a platform for families of kids in college or planning for college to talk to each other and share experiences.
Think College Resources for Families

- Resources for families on website: https://thinkcollege.net/family-resources

- Think College Learn module for families: https://thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn/families-0
FREE

https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/FinalStudentResourceGuide.pdf
Think College can help...

thinkcollegeTA@gmail.com

thank you!
Additional Resources

- National ABLE Resource Center
  http://www.ablenrc.org

- Report on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability
  www.thinkcollege.net

- Ruby’s Rainbow: Scholarships for Youth & Adults with Down Syndrome
  https://rubysrainbow.org
Contact Us

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thank you!