

College Process for Students with Disabilities

Important Things to Know about College Disability Services:

1) Colleges do not have the same legal obligations as high schools.

- Colleges do not fall under the *Individuals with Disabilities Act* (IDEA); therefore, they do not offer nor need to comply with entitlements outlined in your high school IEP.
- Even though many colleges will offer support services, they are not required to provide the same level of support services you may have received in high school.
- Colleges *do*, however, provide accommodations for students who are eligible under the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) to protect them against discrimination.

2) In order to get accommodations, you need to register as a “student with disabilities”.

- The process of applying for accommodations happens *separately* from the college application process; a student does not have to reveal that they have a disability when applying to college.
- Students with disabilities who want to request accommodations, must meet with the Office of Disability Support Services within the college you are considering.
- Students should set up an appointment with the college’s DSS and bring copies of your IEP or Accommodation Plan for the purpose of sharing with them the types of accommodations you had been receiving while in high school.

3) The requirements for documentation in college are changing.

- Students will need to provide *evidence of your disability*. This could include a recent evaluation report from which your IEP was developed.

4) Colleges do not provide “free” evaluations for learning and thinking differences.

- While in high school, students received regular updated evaluations. However, in college, students will need to seek out private evaluations -which may cost.

5) There are no “case managers” in college.

- Students must learn to advocate for themselves in college.
- The Office of Disability Support Services will determine which accommodations the college can provide and will notify professors with a letter from their office.

6) Different schools offer different levels of support.

- All colleges who get federal funds must ensure equal access to students with disabilities.
- Typical accommodations in college may include:
 - Extended time on tests
 - Use of note-takers for class lectures
 - Use of a laptop computer in the classroom
 - Taking exams in a distraction-reduced room

7) The parent is no longer automatically in the loop.

- While in high school, the parent was legally entitled to be part of the process. But in college, the law protects the child’s privacy. The student must advocate for self.