



Planning for Education and Training After High School

Transition Tips for Young Adults with Intellectual Challenges

There are many opportunities for young adults to enhance academic, vocational, social and self advocacy skills after high school. Post-secondary education and training are smart ways to build independence, get ahead in the job market and earn more money. These tips will help.

Research and plan for a college experience.

1. At the Transition Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, ask whether local colleges are offering noncredit, peer-assisted programs for high school students. Some universities have partnerships with local school districts so students with intellectual disabilities can attend courses on campus.
2. Include post-secondary goals in the Transition IEP. Specify interests in auditing classes, applying for entry to a degree program or taking continuing education courses.
3. High school academic courses and extracurricular activities should lay the foundation of reading, critical thinking and independent living skills needed for a successful college experience.
4. Documentation of disability must be current. Some colleges will require a neuropsychological evaluation.
5. In the IEP, designate accommodations needed in a college classroom, such as books on tape, screen reader or speech-recognition software, personal reader or note-taker, recorded or captioned lectures, and tutoring.
6. Meet with staff from the college's Disability Services Office to discuss plans and goals, and the accommodations they offer.
7. Explore transportation options to and from campus.
8. Ask the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor about financial aid resources and funding for an educational coach to attend class.
9. If Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is being received, ask about the Social Security PASS Program (Plans for Achieving Self-Sufficiency). Funds can be saved for college without reduction of SSI checks.
10. Colleges communicate directly with students. A release form must be on file for others to receive access to progress reports, grades and other correspondence.

Explore local vocational training programs.

11. Training for specific jobs can be accessed through community college certificate programs or local workforce development programs such as Pennsylvania's CareerLink (www.cwds.state.pa.us).
12. Many corporations offer skills training for entry-level employees. Ask the job coach about on-the-job training programs.
13. Request information on local business schools' certificate training programs.

Build self-advocacy and social skills.

14. Enroll in a local self-advocacy group to improve self-confidence and social skills that can lead to strong job performance and interaction with co-workers.
15. Explore programs like Best Buddies (www.bestbuddies.org) that facilitate friendship between college students and young adults with disabilities.
16. New social connections after high school graduation can be enhanced through recreational and travel groups for adults with intellectual disabilities.
17. Participate in campus-based or community-based theater, music, sports or other special interest groups.

Match skills, goals and training.

18. Carefully evaluate independent living skills when considering post-secondary education or training.
19. Evaluate how post-secondary education or training will help job opportunities.
20. Consider whether part-time employment and part-time, post-secondary education would fulfill interests and goals.

Go online!

21. The Internet is a valuable, time-saving tool. Here are a few sites we suggest. There are many others! Keep your own list.
 - www.transitiontocollege.net/index.html
 - www.thinkcollege.net
 - www.ncset.org
 - www.ndscenter.org/selfadvo/intro.php
 - www.tcnj.edu/~ccs/
 - www.dli.state.pa.us