



# TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR EDUCATION

TRANSITION PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE



# WHAT IS TRANSITION PLANNING?

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**Transition planning** is the process of laying out the steps that will help you transition from an adolescent to an independent adult. It's the time when you plan for what will happen after you leave high school and enter into life as a young adult. Whether you are preparing for post-secondary education (for example -- education beyond high school such as college, vocational or trade school) or preparing for a job, transition planning is an ongoing process that requires you to be actively involved in decision-making while also involving your family, your school and community agencies.

This section on Education will provide you with information, worksheets and guides to help you, your family, and your school establish a transition plan, as well as present you with resource sites dedicated to helping you become the successful adult you have the potential to be. There is a section with helpful tips for parents and family members too, and how they can help support you as you begin to think about life as an adult.

High school is just the start of the road toward a fulfilling life...what follows after are new challenges and new possibilities. The more you know about what to expect the better you'll thrive!

So, let's get started.

# TALENT KNOWS NO LIMITS

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Individuals with disabilities may need specialized support in school settings. If this is the case, support needs are documented in one of two ways:

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** This is the way most students with disabilities receive support and accommodations. Individuals with an IEP are considered “special education students”.

OR

**504 Plan:** This is a way for students to receive needed accommodations and support, even though they may not qualify for special education, but have a disability.

Both an IEP and a 504 Plan tell your teacher what accommodations (or adjustments to your school environment) need to be made in order for you to do your schoolwork.

Whether you have a 504 Plan or an IEP, your success after high school depends upon you knowing what your disability is, and what accommodations you need to be successful in college or in the workplace. You need to know what supports you need (and how to advocate for these needs) in order to be the best high school student, college student, or employee you can be!

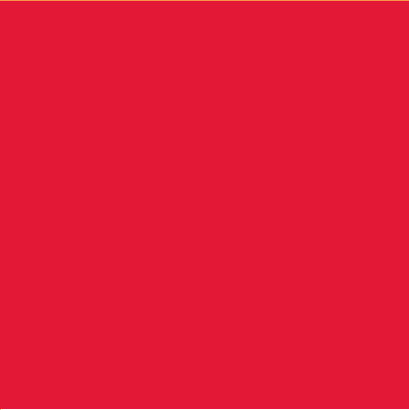
If you aren't sure whether you have an IEP or a 504 Plan, you can always ask one of your teachers or your school counselor. Because most students with disabilities in California have an IEP (as opposed to a 504 Plan), we are choosing to focus on IEPs in this chapter. However, if you would like more information on 504 plans, please see these websites:

<http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/legal-rights/section-504.gs?content=868>

<http://ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

# DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM - IEP

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An Individualized Education Program, or IEP, is essential to figuring out your educational goals. The enactment in 2004 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a well-thought out IEP be developed and updated yearly so that you have a map of what you need to do to move on after high school. It takes into account your needs, preferences and abilities. IEPs are provided for individuals who need them, starting at the pre-school level through the end of high school. Development of your IEP requires input from you, your family, your teachers and your school.

## Your IEP plan:

- records your goals
- keeps track of your academic, cognitive and functional performance
- and notes the accommodations and assistive technology that you need to be successful in high school.



## But first...what's the difference between a Certificate of Completion and a High School diploma?

In order to properly plan for what you will do after high school, it's important to understand the difference between a Certificate of Completion and a high school diploma, since achieving one or the other can affect your future opportunities.

- A certificate of completion will show that you have completed at least four years of high school. The IEP team will decide what you need to do to get your certificate. In addition, each school district may have their own set of requirements for awarding a certificate of completion. Keep in mind that many colleges and employers require diplomas over certificates when considering enrollment in college or when hiring someone for a job.
- A high school diploma states that the student successfully met all high school requirements. Since this document records what you studied and how you did, it gives colleges and employers a clearer sense of your experience and skills. In California to earn a high school diploma there are a certain number of credits and specific classes that must be taken and passed, including one year of Algebra.





## And Now...Your IEP

We've included a number of worksheets to help guide your thinking. When you're done, you'll better understand what you need to do to get ready for life after high school, whether that means more education (including vocational school or college), a job, or both!

- Begin with the Person-Centered Planning process – This process brings you and the people who are interested in your future together so you can develop an action plan based on what you would like to do – it takes into account your dreams and hopes and is the foundation for your IEP. The worksheets involved (3 in all) will help you take a closer look at yourself and your options.
- Work with other students – Working with other students is a great way to discover new ideas. Hearing what other people's goals are may lead you someplace you never thought of before.

The following worksheets can be useful tools to have with you at your planning meetings. Don't worry about not knowing an answer for every question – that's where your parents, teachers, vocational counselors, Workability I/Transition Partnership Project (TPP) Staff, case worker, and/or transition specialists can help.



# WORKSHEET #1 – THE STORY OF YOU.

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## YOUR HISTORY:

What schools have you attended?

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What activities do you participate in at school? Outside of school?

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What special events have affected your life?

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## YOUR PLACES:

Where do you like to spend your time?

.....  
.....

What do you like about these places?

.....  
.....

Is there anything you'd change about these places? What would that be?

.....  
.....

## YOUR SUPPORT GROUP:

Which family members will participate in the transition programs you are or will be involved with now, and in your adult life?

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.....



What agencies will be involved?

.....  
.....

Which friends or community members will play a part in your transition programs and your adult life?

.....  
.....

Your Story:

What is your biggest nightmare about life after high school? (We've all had one at one time or another, so don't be afraid to share, it's the best way to conquer it.)

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.....

What are your biggest strengths, gifts and talents? (Don't sell yourself short, write them all down, these are what will make your dream possible.)

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.....

What is your biggest need to make your dream come true?

.....  
.....





# WORKSHEET #2 – THINKING BEFORE LEARNING

What are your educational goals?

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What kind of classes would you like to take?

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How will you pay for school, books, living accommodations?

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What kind of transportation will you use?

.....  
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What kind of support will you need to be successful?

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Will you need or want to disclose your disability to request academic accommodations?

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.....

How many hours a week would you like to spend in classes?

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Are there other types of educational activities you'd like to participate in? Mentoring? Work-study? Internships?

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# WORKSHEET #3 –THE FUTURE’S WIDE OPEN

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What are your dreams and hopes for the future?

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What worries you about the future?

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Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

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What support would you need to get there?

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# IEP MEETING

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The following script will help you lead your own IEP meeting. It includes topics of discussion to help you get what you need for your transition plan. (Be sure to fill out the worksheet that follows this script before your meeting, so you'll be well prepared for the topics you'll be discussing.)

You may want to let your teacher know that you would like to assume a leadership role in the IEP process. Prior to the meeting, meet with your teacher to discuss goals, objectives and activities for the next year. Educators traditionally write draft IEP goals and objectives in third person. You can request that your goals be written in first person. "I statements" will help to ensure that your perspective is taken into account.

Additionally, you may want to let your teacher know that at the IEP Meeting you would like to:

- Introduce IEP Members
- Summarize your present levels of performance
- Talk about your plans for the future
- Ask questions of team members





An example is included below:

My IEP: .....

Date of meeting: .....

Hi, my name is .....  
and we're here for my IEP meeting.

Would everyone please introduce themselves?

I want to talk about my strengths and interests. They are .....

Would anyone like to add to my strengths?

Mom and Dad, do you have any thoughts or concerns about what we've talked about so far?

I have a right to special education services because .....

Right now in school I am doing/feeling .....

My grades are .....

From last year's IEP, I met these goals .....

This year, my goals are:

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

Does anyone have questions about these goals?

Now I want to talk about accommodations. Some accommodations I use in the classroom and during testing are .....

Does anyone have questions or suggestions about my accommodations?

All of my teachers will get a copy of my updated A & M plan.

For my exit exam I use the following accommodations and modifications .....

After high school, I plan to .....

My work experiences are .....

My other transition activities are .....

Does anyone have information that will help the IEP team make decisions?

Does anyone have any questions for me?

Here is a copy of my procedural safeguards. These rights become mine when I turn 18.

Would everyone please sign the IEP form?

Thank you for coming.

# FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING WORKSHEET BEFORE YOU START YOUR IEP MEETING.

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Topics to be shared at my IEP Meeting

Date of meeting: .....

My strengths are: .....

My Interests are: .....

My goals for this year are:

Goal #1: .....

Goal #2: .....

Goal #3: .....

My current school year:

Grades: .....

Favorite class: .....

Easiest class: .....

Hardest class: .....

Accommodations I use now: .....

My current work experience or extracurricular activities are:

(You may want to bring copies of your current resume to share with IEP Team Members.)

.....

My plans after high school are: .....

Support I will need after high school: .....

Other transition activities I'm doing now or would like to learn about: .....

# DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLAN - ITP

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**An Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is a very important part of your IEP.**

While the IEP focuses on your education, an Individual Transition Plan, or ITP, focuses more on life. It is an ongoing process that establishes the global skills required to achieve your dreams and goals. The ITP drives the necessary services and support needed from age 16 until you exit high school and requires that a course of study be set to ensure that you earn a Diploma or a Certificate of Completion.

In simpler terms, the IEP is all about what you'd like to study and do after high school, and the ITP is about the concrete steps you need to take to make sure you will be able to do this and more. The ITP identifies measurable post high school goals including: training/education, employment, and independent living skills.

Things may change along the way, after all, your favorite song, food and color change sometimes, so can your goals. But with a set plan, adjusting to changes is actually easier...and you may find that while the in-between steps may change a bit, your ultimate goal to lead a successful and fulfilling life will not.

In addition, the ITP specifies transition activities that will be completed during the next year to assist you with your preparation for your independence and success. The activities should support the development of your after school goals.





## Summary of Performance

The Summary of Performance (SOP) is a report provided by your school, summarizing your academic achievements and performance. Academic and/or employment accommodations are included as well. Its purpose is to identify the resources and supports you currently use as well as makes it easier for you and your family to plan for those that you may need as an adult.

The Summary of Performance and ITP is important to assist your transition from high school to higher education, training and/or employment. This information can help establish your eligibility for reasonable accommodations and supports in higher education settings such as college and other training programs.

The SOP must be completed during the final year of a student's high school education. However, it is useful to develop this document much earlier. You can be responsible for updating its contents with the help of your teacher.

## Transition Services

In truth, transition planning starts before birth, it's something that your parents, family and other support members have been doing for you all your life. Now as you become able to make your own decisions and take on more responsibility for your future, it's important that you are aware of the transition services available to you.

There are a number of activities you can complete to help you with your transition planning. Check out the tools and information on these websites.

[www.dor.ca.gov](http://www.dor.ca.gov) – Department of Rehabilitation – employment related counseling, training, support, job placement and more.

[www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu) – HEATH Resource Center – guidelines for helping high school students actively participate in transition planning.

[www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org) – AHEAD – professional organization committed to post-secondary participation of people with disabilities.

[www.going-to-college.org](http://www.going-to-college.org) – what to do to enter college and what expect once there.

[www.schoolguides.org](http://www.schoolguides.org) – resource with valuable info on topics such as lesson plans, career tips, and more

[www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/cprep.html](http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/cprep.html) – DO-IT – online tutorials for students preparing for college



# PLANNING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

----- GET INVOLVED NOW

It's never too early to become involved in activities and programs that will lead you to a successful post-high school experience. Think about school related clubs, student council, volunteering, internships and work-study programs. These extra curricular activities are terrific ways to learn new things, gather information and expand your thinking. Plus:

- it looks good on your college application and helps you figure out your interests.
- it's a great way to gain valuable experience and build your resume.
- it's a great way to make new friends!





# PARENTS' SECTION

## TIPS FOR PARENTS



All students applying to traditional degree programs are held to the same academic standards and procedures. While more and more colleges are accommodating students with disabilities, they are not covered by IDEA, therefore, students with disabilities are not “entitled” to the services and support they get in high school. Instead, they must demonstrate that they are eligible for certain services and support. While a student with disabilities still has certain rights, as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, there are limits to what colleges are required to provide and adjust. However, programs do exist to help students with disabilities get accommodations and services to assist them to succeed in higher education.

Some services such as transportation from home to school and assistance with using the restroom or eating lunch are not required to be provided by colleges and universities under the ADA or Section 504. These services may be essential for your child to attend college. You may need to talk with Disabled Student Services and other students who have the same needs about creative solutions to meet these needs.

Visit [www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu) for information on finding the right post-secondary institute.



### How to help your child prepare.

There are many steps parents can take to actively participate in their child's transition planning. For example:

- First and foremost, foster independence and encourage your child to become involved in his/her IEP planning.
- Talk about college, how it's different from high school and what will be expected.
- Visit a college to help your child get “a feel” for the environment.
- Encourage your child to take a college class while still in high school.

For more tips and ideas visit: [www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)



### Getting acquainted with college.

Preparing to choose a college is exciting and can be a lot of work, but it can also be a lot of fun! Here are some suggestions to help make it less overwhelming.

- Visit the schools you are interested in – be sure to carefully review the campus topography and buildings in case mobility is an issue.
- Gather information regarding entrance exams and whether exam accommodations will be provided.
- Connect with the school's disabled student services office.
- If the college has on-campus housing, visit dorms and other living accommodations — develop a plan if personal care assistance will be needed (see “Independent Living” chapter in this toolkit for more information on personal care assistance).
- Plan for financial funding. This is a big one. The following websites provide useful information on scholarships, grants and more. Be sure to visit the college Financial Aid Office.

[www.dor.ca.gov](http://www.dor.ca.gov) – Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) – may be able to pay for post-secondary education related to an employment goal. However, even if such financial support is approved, you will need to apply for federal financial aid grants (not loans) in order for DOR to pay for you to attend college.

[www.cccco.edu](http://www.cccco.edu) – Board of Governors (BOG) – sets guidelines for colleges. If eligible, the BOG waives some community colleges fees.

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) – info on obtaining financial aid for post-secondary education

[www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov) – info on financial aid for college and career training

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) – largest database for scholarships, plus financial aid and tips on student life

[www.apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch\\_ss/welcome.jsp](http://www.apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp) – online search site for scholarships, internships, grants and loans.

[incighteducation.org/scholarships.php](http://incighteducation.org/scholarships.php) – scholarship fund

[www.scholarships4students.com/special\\_scholarships/htm](http://www.scholarships4students.com/special_scholarships/htm)

DisabilityInfo.gov: [www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=84](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=84) – financial aid and scholarships.

# THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

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College is radically different from high school. The structured environment you're used to in high school no longer applies. Instead, your success will be determined by your ability to handle an entirely new level of independence — one in which self-determination and self-discipline will be key.



# HIGH SCHOOL VS. COLLEGE

## GENERAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE PROGRAMMING

### Classes

	High School	Post Secondary
<b>1</b>	Usually follow a school-directed schedule and proceed from one class to another.	Individual students must manage their own time and schedules.
<b>2</b>	General education classes dictated by state/district requirements.	Class based on field of study; requirements may vary.
<b>3</b>	Typically a school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters. Summer classes may be offered but are not used to accelerate graduation.	Academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters plus a week for final exams. (Some institutions are on a trimester schedule.) Courses are offered fall, spring, and summer semesters, and summer classes may be used to accelerate graduation.
<b>4</b>	Class attendance is usually mandatory and monitored carefully.	Attendance policies may vary with each instructor. (Lack of attendance may impact performance.)
<b>5</b>	Classes generally have no more than 30 – 35 students.	Classes may have 100 or more students.
<b>6</b>	Textbooks are typically provided at little or no expense.	Textbooks can be expensive. (An anticipated range for a full-time student is \$200-400 per semester.)
<b>7</b>	Guidance is provided for students so that they will be aware of graduation requirements.	Graduation requirements are complex and vary for different fields of study. (Note: You are responsible for monitoring your progress and seeking advice.)
<b>8</b>	Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the student's IEP.	Modifications that change course outcomes will not be offered. (Hint: Modified High School courses may not be accepted in the admission process.)

## Instructors

	High School	Post Secondary
<b>1</b>	Grade and check completed homework.	Assume homework is completed and students are able to perform on a test.
<b>2</b>	May remind students of incomplete assignments.	May not remind students of incomplete assignments. It's your responsibility to check with your instructor to see if requirements are being met.
<b>3</b>	May know student's needs and approach students when they need assistance.	Are usually open and helpful, but expect students to initiate contact when assistance is needed.
<b>4</b>	May be available before, during, or after class.	May require students to attend scheduled office hours.
<b>5</b>	Often provide students with information missed during absence.	Expect students to get information from classmates when they miss a class.
<b>6</b>	Present material to help students understand what is in the textbook.	May not follow the textbook. Lectures enhance to topic area. ( You need to connect lectures and textbook.)
<b>7</b>	Often write information on the board or overhead to be copied for notes.	May lecture nonstop. If instructors write on the board it may be to support the lecture, not summarize it. (Good notes are a must!)
<b>8</b>	Teach knowledge and facts, leading students through the thinking process.	Expect students to think independently and connect seemingly unrelated information.
<b>9</b>	Often take time to remind students of assignment and test dates.	Expect students to read, save, and refer back to the course syllabus. (Syllabi are your way of knowing exactly what is expected of you-when assignments are due, and how you will be graded.

## Studying

	High School	Post Secondary
<b>1</b>	Study time outside of class may vary (maybe as little as 1-3 hours per class.)	Generally need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.
<b>2</b>	Instructors may review class notes and text material regularly for classes.	Review class notes and text material regularly. (Use the time between classes carefully.)
<b>3</b>	Expected to read short assignments that are discussed and re-taught.	Substantial amounts of assigned reading and writing may not be directly addressed in class. ( It's up to you to read and understand assigned material or access support.)

## Testing

	High School	Post Secondary
<b>1</b>	Given for most assigned work.	May not be provided for all assigned work.
<b>2</b>	Good homework grades may assist in raising over grade when test grades are lower.	Tests and major papers provide the majority of the grade.
<b>3</b>	Extra credit options are often available.	Generally speaking, extra credit options are not used to raise a grade.
<b>4</b>	Initial test grades, especially when low, may not have adverse effect on grade.	First tests are often “wake up” calls to let you know what is expected. (Hint: Watch out! They may account for substantial part of your final grade. Contact instructor, academic advisor, or student accessibility personnel if you do poorly.)
<b>5</b>	Graduation requirements may be met with a grade of D or higher.	Requirements may be met only if the student's average meets the departmental standards. (Generally a 2.0 or higher.)

## Grades

	High School	Post Secondary
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## Bottom Line

	High School	Post Secondary
<b>1</b>	High School is structured with most decisions being managed by your parents or the state/ district. Success is a combination of your efforts and those of others.	College is less restricted and promotes independence. Each college has its own requirements. And, your success is a direct result of the effort you put into it.



# HOW TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE

BY DRIA FEARNE

As a disabled student with Attention Deficit Disorder and Mild Dyslexia, I was a little nervous about going to college. I thought that it would be too difficult. Fortunately, college is not as scary as guidance counselors and teachers make it out to be, but rather feels like the next logical step after high school. You will not fail in college if you put in the effort, especially if you take advantage of the following tips.

## Disabilities Services Office

Each university has an office dedicated to assisting students with disabilities. These offices will assign you a counselor who can help you get the accommodations you need to meet your class requirements.

Visit your Disabilities Services Office before you choose which college to attend.

This allows you to see what each school offers, and lets you know if you will get the services you need. Visiting UCLA's Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) was very important in helping me choose the school, because I knew the specialists were dedicated to helping every student succeed, and I've had a very positive experience with them.

Take care of your paperwork (documentation) ASAP.

It is important to have documentation to verify your disability. There are no IEP's in college, so it is your responsibility to go into your disability services office to sign up for services if you need them. Nobody is going to track you down to provide you with the accommodations you need. If you are learning disabled,





your documentation is only good for five years. So, make sure you have an updated copy, otherwise you may not be eligible for services. I recommend renewing documentation during your senior year of high school, because most universities won't pay for it. Some schools do pay for it (Cal State Fullerton for example), but Learning Disability testing is a long process, and you may not have it done before exams start popping up. If this happens, it may be difficult to get the accommodations you need. Also, make sure your documentation states everything you may need (e.g. tape recorder for lectures, computer for exams, a notetaker, etc.) even if you haven't needed those services previously.

### Services Offered

Many schools offer lots of different services for students with disabilities, including: test proctoring (which allows for extended time on exams, as well as providing you with a private room and a computer), notetaking services, tutoring, adaptive equipment, books on tape (for people who are blind or dyslexic), sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, and van service. Services are only given if it is needed due to the individual's specific disability.

### Getting Classes

#### Priority Enrollment

Priority enrollment allows students with disabilities to enroll in their classes before the rest of the student population. If you require a certain type of class schedule (mornings only -- afternoons only) due to your disability, you will want to take full advantage of this opportunity. Lots of schools have priority enrollment for students with disabilities. Use it!

#### Your Class Is Full

If you don't get a class you want (or are placed on a waiting list), it is still recommended to show up on the first day of class. A lot of people don't show up on the first day and you may still get in. If it's a course you absolutely need to take (to graduate, etc.) professors will sometimes allow you to enroll in the class even if it is full.

## How to Get the “A”

### Get to Know Your Instructors

Use your professor or teaching assistant's (T.A.) Office Hours (a time set aside each week for students to wander in and ask questions about the course), because it's an opportunity to be more than a face in the crowd. This allows you to get extra help in the class, and you can ask your instructor about what might be on the exam (you can cut your study time in half!). Talk to your T.A. about any upcoming papers and give them a draft to look over. You can also ask them to give you input on class lectures. It's the T.A. that gives you your grade, so if you know what they are looking for in your assignment, you can probably get a better grade. If you're in a larger class, you also need to talk to the professor to set up your accommodations (your Disability Services Office should give you a letter for your professor to break the ice). A professor who knows you personally is much more likely to provide you with the accommodations you need.

### Study Environment/Style

Where do you study most effectively? Maybe in your room with music on, or in the library with absolute silence. Make sure you know where you study best and stick to it. I go by myself to the most quiet library on campus (not the main one, which is really social), so I have no distractions. Also, can you cram for exams the night before, or do you need to study a week ahead of time? I, like many students with learning disabilities, cannot cram for an exam the night before and retain any information; So, instead I study for a week or so before the exam for an hour a night.



## Learning Style

How do you learn? Do you learn best by auditory, visual, or kinesthetic (or tactile) learning styles. Auditory means you learn best by hearing, visual by seeing, and kinesthetic by doing. Teaching styles tend to be more geared toward auditory and visual learners, making it more difficult for kinesthetic learners to succeed. Coincidentally most LD students are kinesthetic learners. For kinesthetic learners I recommend taking a little non-distracting object to class for your non-writing hand (especially if you're a compulsive pen clicker), such as a koosh ball or silly putty, to channel the excess energy. I have to say that my disability has played a positive role in the transition from high school to college. Yes, I said "positive," because many of the people that I have met in college skated through their entire high school career, while I always had to go that extra mile for the grade, and it is that determination that has made a world of difference for me in this academic environment.

**Word to the wise:** I do recommend going into your respective disability services office with documentation in hand (if applicable) and a smile on your face, because you are going to see a lot of those people over the next four years.

Dria has Attention Deficit Disorder, dysgraphia, and a specific learning disability affecting language acquisition. Her plans are to attend law school after finishing her undergraduate degree. Dria is a third year political science major at UCLA, where she is heavily involved in both the Office of Residential Life and the Office for Students with Disabilities. Feel free to e-mail her with any questions, comments, or suggestions at [dria@ucla.edu](mailto:dria@ucla.edu).



# SUPPORT FOR THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

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Although the college experience is one of independence, it doesn't mean you have to go at it alone. Your family should always be your first level of support. Keep your parents and friends up to date with how you're doing — call, text, email, IM, facebook, tweet — there's no excuse for not letting those you love and who care about you know what's going on. And when you need help...ask.

In addition to friends and family, your college has a host of support services you can turn to. Counselors, tutors and study groups are great for keeping up on your academics. Even if you're doing well, make a point of talking to your teacher and counselor every now and then to see if you're on track. Join a study group or sign up for a tutor — it's a great way to share ideas about the subject matter or learn even better ways to study.

Mentoring is another excellent way to get real-world advice on a field you may be interested in, or how an adult with a disability has handled the transition from high school to post-secondary education or employment. What better way to learn about something than from a person already doing it. Chapters for Disability Mentoring Day are available statewide — visit your local independent living center <http://www.cfilc.org> or [disabilitymentor.net](http://disabilitymentor.net) to find a list of mentors.

And, don't forget internships. These are a valuable way to gain experience in a field of interest, and maybe even gain a contact for a great job after college graduation. Look to the college internship boards for opportunities.

# PLANNING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

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“Accommodations” refers to changes in classroom or exam setting needed to lessen the impact of a disability. It can include testing accommodations (i.e. more time for tests or test taking in a quiet environment), sign language interpreting, classroom materials in an accessible format you can use (such as large print, electronic text, or Braille), lab assistance, reduced college course load (taking fewer classes), adapted seating and more.

It is important to know that colleges and universities do not have to provide accommodations if they drastically change the curriculum of the class.

Each college has its own set of services that they will provide, some of which are required by law. You should find out what services and programs exist and what your college of interest will and will not do. For more information, one of several great websites to visit is: [www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu). And of course, you should talk to the college’s Disabled Student Services office or Disability Services Coordinator.





# YOUR RIGHTS

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While some requirements that apply through high school will continue to apply upon leaving high school and entering post-secondary education, many rights and how they are addressed will change. It's important that you understand these changes.

This section will briefly cover the basics. For more detailed information, please obtain a copy of the ADA Section 504 and Title II by contacting: [www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html](http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html)

- Post secondary schools are not required to provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), but they are required to apply the same admission requirements to you as they do to all applicants.
- You do not have to inform a post-secondary school of your disability — this is purely voluntary and you may choose not to do so until you have been admitted. But, if you want them to provide academic adjustments or modifications, you will have to let them know at the time you request accommodations. The school may require you to provide documentation for your disability. Each school will set their own requirements for documentation, these may include: diagnosis of your disability, how it affects your academic performance, credentials of the professional providing the diagnosis. Find out early what your school of interest will need.
- Academic adjustments are made depending on the disability and the individual's need. The school is not required to lower or substantially change basic requirements, services, programs or activities that would cause undue financial or administrative burdens. Be sure to communicate what your needs are ahead of time and research what a school is and is not required to do.
- A school may not charge you for any academic adjustments, nor charge extra for programs and activities available to other students who do not have disabilities.
- Most post-secondary schools have a Disability Services Coordinator (aka Disabled Students Program Director, Section 504 Coordinator or aka ADA Coordinator) – this is your contact person for dealing with any issues that may come up – from discrimination to getting the correct academic adjustment made.

For more information on your civil rights and access to FAQ's, visit: [www.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/disability.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/disability.html).

# ALTERNATIVE TO COLLEGE

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College is not for everyone, but the chance to live a fulfilling life after high school is! Vocational training can be a good option in many cases and there are many resources available to get you started.

The Regional Occupational Program (ROP) provides vocational and occupational training. There are local chapters across the country so check online for the office in your area. In addition, the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), as mentioned previously, offers employment-related counseling, training, and even job placement. Following is a short list of additional sites you can access for information on post-high school job training.

[www.carocp.org](http://www.carocp.org) – Association of Regional Occupation Centers – provides vocational training.

[www.centralonestop.com](http://www.centralonestop.com) – work development services for all job seekers and employers.

Plus, check out the Drive of Your Life website at [www.driveofyourlife.org](http://www.driveofyourlife.org) – it provides great online tools for learning about yourself, higher education and different careers.



# WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT!

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College or any type of post-secondary education or training can be the most exciting time of your life. It's the time when you will learn to be on your own, meet new people, see new things and start a path toward the most independent life possible for you. Take full advantage of every resource, family and friend, ask questions, make lists, don't limit yourself, and be honest about what you want and what you are capable of. And most of all...enjoy yourself!



The logo features the text "talent knows no limits" in a white, sans-serif font. To the left of the text is a graphic of four overlapping white squares of varying sizes, arranged in a staggered pattern. The entire logo is set against a solid orange background.

talent  
knows  
no  
limits

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[www.tknlyouth.org](http://www.tknlyouth.org)



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