

Post-Secondary Support Options for Students on the Autism Spectrum



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More and more post-secondary schools are making accommodations for students with Asperger Syndrome and related conditions. In order to receive these accommodations the student and family need to decide when and how they will discuss their needs and with whom. This article talks about their options.

Options for Receiving Support in Post-Secondary Education

The most important thing to consider when contemplating post-secondary education is what is the student ready for? Educationally they may be a whiz but they may never have had a sleep-over or shopped for their own dinner. Realistic assessment at this time goes a long way to a successful time in the future. Remember, college is not the end but only the means to the end. Taking courses at the community college and also working part-time is a great solution for some and a four-year college away from home a perfect solution for another. One size does not fit all.

Disability Support Service (DSS)

In order to receive services in college you must bring the following to the Disability Support Service (DSS) office - Adult scale testing results within the last 3 years (most high schools do not give this type of testing so it has to be arranged for outside of school), your high school IEP (there is no guarantee that these accommodations will be used but it can be looked on as a guideline). This meeting should take place well before the start of school. The adult testing could take up to

three months to arrange, administer and receive the results of.

1. **Accommodations:** The student has some choices. If he is able to advocate for himself (herself) then he can go to the DSS - for help such as setting up accommodations prior to the semester - such as note taking, books on tape. During the semester he can access the DSS office free of charge as part of regular tuition for support. But, that would have to be at his impetus. All colleges are different. Some colleges have teachers that tutor, some have grad students, and some have peers.

2. **Parent Communication:** In order for any communication to occur between the college and the home students must sign a paper to allow his/her parents' permission to speak to college personnel. This is highly important in the counseling area. **IF YOUR STUDENT DOES NOT SIGN THIS WAIVER NO ONE WILL TALK TO YOU ABOUT YOUR CHILD!!**

3. **Counseling:** At this transition time in a students' life they most probably would benefit from seeing a counselor weekly at school. The parent and student should interview the health care professor to ensure that they understand the spectrum. The student should sign a waiver to allow his parents to allow for appropriate communication with the health care professional.

4. **College Coaching:** College coaching is a new option available to students that require a structured facilitated mentor with varying degrees of support depending on the student's requirement. This coach can support academic and social/emotional integration into the school environment via person to person meetings, emails, and/or phone calls. The coach will also meet with the parents or speak with the parents regularly with permission from the student to ensure that everyone is knowledgeable about where the

student is at any given time. The goal is to help the student learn to advocate, structure, motivate for him/herself.

5. Different Types of Programs:

a. AS programs: Some colleges offer structured programs within the regular college setting. Most are LD programs and some are AS programs. There is an extra fee per semester for these programs.

b. LD programs (if you also have a documented LD you are able to get into existing college LD programs where they may not yet have services for AS)

c. Some schools have more insulated environments where students live on campus and go to nearby community colleges or technical schools. They work on life skills and foster independence towards the next stage in their life.

516Ads - Thank you once again for the opportunity to write about ASDs on your website and to link to ours. You are the best. Happy and healthy New Year to you and yours.

Pat and the gang at AHA

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