## What Parents and Students With Disabilities Should Know About College

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## APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Colleges are not allowed to ask applying students whether they have disabilities, and even when students talk about their disability in their application, that information is very unlikely to get to the DS office. Instead, students have to apply for services. This is usually a very simple procedure that often involves completing a form and may also include meeting with a member of DS staff. If they want to, students can complete part of the application process before they get to school (as soon as they are accepted and enroll) so that they stand a better chance of having their accommodations in place once

attending any meetings, students will also have to provide proof that they have a disability (called

There are a few things families should know about the DS application process. First, most students will be found eligible for accommodations at their college, but they are not guaranteed accommodations just because they received them in high school. Colleges have the right to decide what documentation students have to provide and get to (r)-6(i)(9)8(h)-(97707.5 Tm.21 681.34 Tm[=10()10(t)-7(hMC

forms and

Parents, fearing that their student will not make a good choice about when to apply for accommodations, may contact DS hoping to complete the application for their students. At most schools, DS cannot even talk to parents without a release from students, so they cannot engage in this process with them. And most offices will not do this, because if students have not shown an interest in accommodations by making an application on their own, DS will not go through the review and approval process as it would be a waste of their time if students never come in to receive their accommodations.

## PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE

Again, preparation for college for students with disabilities and without is essentially the same. All students need study skills so that they can independently manage long-term projects, keep up with intensive reading loads, write research papers, and take effective notes in a very different academic environment. Many students find college challenging lectures are longer, classes meet less frequently, professors are only available at limited times, and they have to keep up with work without daily deadlines to meet. And often, they are evaluated only on the basis of two papers or exams. This is a new experience for disabled and nondisabled students alike.

Students with disabilities need to understand their learning profile (strengths and weaknesses) and have strategies they can use to meet college demands. In high school,

more comfortable. There are many great options available, so students should not lower their postsecondary expectations.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

PRINT

Hamblet, E. C. (2011). Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Kravets, M., & Wax, I. (2011).

New York, NY: Random House.

Lawrenceville, NJ:

## ONLINE

Going to College: A Website for Students With Disabilities (http://www.going-tocollege.org/index.html) Heath Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center (http://www.heath.gwu.edu)

Letter to Parents From the U.S. Department of Education (http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/parent-20070316.html)

(Pamphlet available from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html)