

Inclusive Post Secondary Education Opportunities for People with Intellectual Disabilities

8 Tips from a Parent's Perspective

1. Communicate with your child to find out if they want to go to college. It must be **their** goal for them to succeed. If it is not their goal, that is okay! You can explore other options like trade school, internships, or going right to work.
2. Educate and advocate with your child about college goals. Your teachers and counselors might not know about inclusive education opportunities. Be active in setting goals and check IEP and vocational rehabilitation (VR) paperwork to make sure your child's goals are documented correctly.
3. Do your research by checking out college websites, following programs on social media, and attending virtual open houses. Whenever possible, visit the schools your child is interested in. Also, visit www.thinkcollege.net.
4. Remember, if your child is going to a Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP), you may be able to get financial aid, so submit your FAFSA. Also, apply for scholarships and talk to your VR counselor about available financial support. Program costs in informational material from the college may not include housing, food, or transportation. Make sure you talk to the program staff about total costs so you can plan ahead!
5. The programs in this presentation are competitive and accept a limited number of applicants each cycle, so have back up plans. Apply to different schools and remember you can always reapply! If your child does not get accepted one year, try transition programs, employment, or volunteering while they wait to reapply.
6. Work on professional, community, and independent living skills! Get your child involved in community service, after-school activities, or a part-time job for experience. Practice making big and small choices, using a phone and email, handling money, and spending the night away from home whenever possible. Programs can provide some support, but they also look at applicants' experience with the skills above.
7. Stay organized by marking down important deadlines and learning about what paperwork that programs need applicants to submit. Examples include the latest IEP, psychological testing (including adaptive behavior), transcripts, and letters of recommendations. Colleges will require psychological testing to be in the previous 3 years, so I recommend getting new testing done closer to when your child will be applying to college.
8. Know that you and your child are not alone! You will meet some amazing people along the way who will truly understand you and your journey. Bring them into your circle, ask questions, bounce ideas off each other and keep them close! I can guarantee nothing about this process is easy, but what really has for our kids throughout their lives. When things get stressful, step back, take a breath and then get back to fighting for your kids! It takes a village!