



Getting Your ARD College-Ready

Amy Litzinger, TxP2P Staff

If you're like my parents, you never miss an opportunity to tell your kid they can do anything, including go to college. You may have even noticed your child probably is capable of post school learning with their peers. You are all for your kid, and ready to prepare her for the next step after school. But how do you design your ARD paperwork to match these goals? Well, here's what I learned from my own experience. Maybe my own hindsight can help! (And don't worry, even if your child is not looking at college, some of these things will help with self advocacy and a more person-centered life.)

Elementary School

- Teach your kid his diagnosis and what he needs and why.
- Make sure your child is present during her ARD meetings
- Try to focus long-term when setting goals. Where do you see your child at the end of high school? What needs to happen at school to get him there?
- Write realistic goals. It doesn't make sense to reprimand a first grader for switching b and d, when according to therapy goals, she shouldn't even be holding a pencil yet.

Middle school

- I wish we had aligned school therapy goals with what I was doing in class. For example, in sixth grade we were learning about valence electrons in atoms. In retrospect, we should have been practicing drawing them when I was being pulled out of class, instead of something that wasn't linked academically. We fixed this issue in high school when OT started helping me with my art projects. This was especially helpful when we had to draw three-dimensional shapes because I have issues with spatial reasoning. "How exactly does one draw a cube, when one's vision is essentially flat, and I can't hold a pencil straight up?"
- As a middle schooler with a new power chair, I wish we'd built some time in the school day to learn how to drive it safely.

High school

- Get proper documentation of your child's diagnosis and neuropsych testing, while the school district will pay for it. You will need this information for college applications and possibly SATs or ACTs. Every modification must be documented in the ARD for at least

Texas Parent to Parent

1805 Rutherford Ln. ★ Suite 201 ★ Austin, TX 78754 ★ 866-896-6001 ★ 512-458-8600

website: www.txp2p.org ★ Email: info@txp2p.org

nine months before you ask for modifications on these exams. You must ask six months before your test date. If you need something, it's best to get it in the ARD at least by your child's junior year.

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