



Texas Parent to Parent

Pathways to Adulthood:

Thinking about going to college

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Many of you may wonder if your child might go to college some day, whether 2-year or 4-year schools or some other post-secondary college experience. And if so, how do you prepare for this big decision? I've discovered several excellent websites with useful information on this subject.

One website is going-to-college.org Below is a summary of the major topics taken from the website with advice on each topic:

Here's a quick glimpse of My Place:

- **My learning style** – Find out how you learn best. This knowledge will be very helpful when you are picking out your college classes, learning new information and studying for your tests.
- **Knowing my strengths** – Figure out your strengths. Everyone has strengths, but sometimes it can be hard to discover them. Knowing what your strengths are will help you choose the classes that are right for you and help you find a major and career in which you can excel.
- **Exploring my interests** – Investigate your interests. Determine what you like to do, what holds your attention and areas in which you have a passion. These interests will play a role in choosing a major, your college experience and eventual satisfaction with your job.
- **Accepting my disability** – Learn more about disability, how to make sense of your documentation and to accept differences in yourself and others. Read about famous people with disabilities and find out how they use their strengths in their careers.
- **Setting my goals** – Make a plan to accomplish your goals. Sometimes large goals can seem overwhelming. Learn how to take a goal, break it into smaller steps and achieve your objectives.
- **My advocacy plan** – Learn how to speak up for what you want in an effective way. This skill is important to have in college because you are ultimately in charge of your education and will need to communicate with faculty, advisers and college personnel.

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

Here's a quick glimpse of Campus Life:

- **Discovering college life** – Find out the differences between high school and college.
- **Faculty expectations** – Discover what faculty members will expect from you and what you can expect from them.
- **Getting accommodations** – Learn the process for getting accommodations in college.
- **Sharing my disability** – Find out what you have to tell your professors. Also learn some tips for communicating effectively with your professors.
- **Getting good grades** – Learn some tips and tricks for getting good grades in college such as what to do before the semester starts, during the first week of your classes and throughout the semester.
- **Exploring technology** – Investigate some technology options that could help you succeed in college.
- **Finding resources** – Learn about resources both on and off campus that can support you while you are in college.

Here's a quick glimpse of Planning for College:

- **Choosing a college** – Find a good match for you. By considering key features, you can increase your likelihood for success in college.
- **Deciding on a major** – Learn what steps you can take to choose a major. To do this you need to find a major that will use your strengths, minimize the areas in which you have difficulty and capitalize on the areas about which you are passionate.
- **Applying for college** – Figure out what you need to do when applying for college. Each college has its own application requirements, form, fees, due dates and acceptance procedures. You'll learn the process for applying, tips for writing your essay, how to get your recommendation letters and how to keep it all organized.
- **Getting financial aid** – Investigate your financial aid options so you are prepared to cover college expenses. You'll learn how to get financial aid, what aid is available for students with disabilities, how to get scholarships and how to budget your money while in college.
- **Taking admission tests** – Learn about the SAT and ACT and learn how to prepare for these tests. It's important to understand how eligible students with disabilities can get accommodations on these tests.
- **High school "To Do" list** – Learn the steps you need to take in high school to get into college. All of these "To Do" items can seem overwhelming, but by having a plan, you will be better able to get it all done.

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Another great website is **thinkcollege.net**; information there includes Find a College, Find a Resource, and Information for Students. It also has a list of colleges that offer courses and programs for students with disabilities. Here is the list for Texas:

<u>Austin Community College</u>	STEPS- Skills, Training and Education for Personal Success	Austin, TX
<u>St. Edward's University Austin, TX</u>	GO Project at St. Edward's University	Austin, TX
<u>West Texas A&M University</u>	Where the Learning Continues (WTLC)	Canyon, TX
<u>Texas A&M University</u>	Postsecondary Access and Training in Human Services (PATHS)	College Station, TX
<u>Lone Star College-CyFair</u>	CCDEL	Cypress, TX
<u>Houston Community College - Central</u>	VAST Academy	Houston, TX
<u>Midwestern State University</u>	Autism Support Program	Wichita Falls, TX

Also at **thinkcollege.net** is this statement about the differences between high school and college:

High School

The law is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) -- an "[entitlement](#)" law intended to guarantee persons with disabilities a free and appropriate primary and secondary education. IDEA is about success. Funding is mandated to identify children with significant problems and provide them with appropriate services that facilitate successful learning, including course modifications. Education is a RIGHT and must be provided in an appropriate environment to all individuals. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) give parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. Student and parent advocates for student, and family input is actively sought.

College

Laws are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act - "non-discrimination" statutes that are based on a civil rights model. They aren't entitlement laws, and they don't guarantee successful learning or mandate the creation of special programs for persons with disabilities. ADA is about access. The goal of Section 504 and the ADA is to remove barriers and to guarantee reasonable accommodations so that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to participate. FERPA transfers privacy rights to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Parents do not have the right to review their child's college records without the written permission of the student.

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Impact on Students with Intellectual Disabilities ID

This important and far-reaching change in legal protections has implications for all students with disabilities as they move to college. Because a college education is not a RIGHT, participation in college courses is often a negotiation between the college and the student. Students with intellectual disabilities are taking college classes, but that participation is often negotiated on a case by case basis, as they are not legally required to allow participation of students that are not deemed “otherwise qualified” to take a course. On campuses where there is an established program for students with intellectual disabilities, the staff of the program may assist with those negotiations. It is important to note that with appropriate supports in place, students with labels of [intellectual disability](#) are finding success in college courses of all types.

In the next newsletter I'll report on websites and information for other post-secondary options for students with disabilities.

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