

Reasons and Steps to THINKING College

A Companion Resource to **COLLEGE BOUND** for students with **disabilities** and their **families**



Top 10 reasons for YOU to THINK COLLEGE

- 1 College has Options** There are lots of different types of college classes and programs these days – some are in person, some are on-line, and some include both. Chances are good there are college classes out there that are right for you.
- 2 College is for Everyone** Many of your high school classmates will go to college in one way or another - and you can too.
- 3 College means Opportunity** Going to college is the next step toward independence and adulthood after high school.
- 4 College includes New People** College classes give you a chance to meet new people you might not meet otherwise - a place to make new friends.
- 5 College involves New Experiences** College is a time to explore your interests in a variety of subjects both in and out of the classroom.
- 6 College means Learning** College gives you a chance to read and hear about things that were not covered in your high school classes.
- 7 College has Work Experiences** College campuses have lots of jobs for students in places like the dining hall, sports center, offices, and research labs so you can try different things and make a little money for living expenses.
- 8 College is Career Exploration** By going to college, you might find out about jobs you never knew existed before.
- 9 College builds Your Resume** By going to college, you might find out about jobs you never knew existed before. Going to college for any amount of time will help you get a job you like that can pay the bills.
- 10 College is Fun** Colleges have many types of clubs, sports, shows, events, and social gatherings so you can relax and enjoy yourself - when you get breaks from studying and doing classwork.

Now that you know college is an option and you have had a chance to think about good reasons to go to college, it is time to begin planning for it. There are a number of steps you can take, starting now. Think about the steps listed on the next page, and work with your parents, teachers, case manager, and IEP or support team to create a plan to help you get to college after high school or when you are ready.

12 Steps to help YOU PLAN for COLLEGE

- **Tell People** Talk with your family and case manager/teachers about going to college and ask them to help you figure out your options.
- **Put College on Your IEP** Share your goal of going to college at your IEP meeting - ask to have it written down with steps to take while still in high school.
- **Take High School Classes** Choose high school classes that will help you get into college. Get help from your case manager or school guidance counselor.
- **Use Assistive Technology** Work hard in your classes to reach your goals during high school. Find out about using assistive technology that can help you.
- **Think About Jobs You Might Want** Spend time both in school and out of school getting information about jobs that interest you.
- **Get Experiences** Get involved in extracurricular activities and gain volunteer/work experiences.
- **Connect with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**
Apply for DVR services that might be able to help you get work experience or pay for college.
- **Plan for the Cost of College** Talk with your family and guidance counselor to find out about different ways to pay for college.
- **Save Money** Start or keep saving money to help with your college expenses.
- **Protect Your Public Benefits** Set up a benefits analysis to determine the best way for you to save for college if you get public benefits such as SSI or SSDI and Medicaid.
- **Visit Colleges and Stop at Disability Resource Centers** Tour college campuses and set up meetings with the disability resource center at the colleges where you choose to tour.
- **Do Your Best** Study, work hard, advocate for yourself, and be involved in your school and community. Remember – what you do now can change your future!



Conclusion

Many individuals do not follow the traditional path to college these days. Colleges are working to meet the needs of people with many types of disabilities. The job market has lots of different employment options too – and colleges offer classes to help people get jobs. Employers like to see college course work on resumes. It just makes sense to Think College!