MN Regional Low Incidence Projects
Region 11

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Assistive Technology Newsletter

Tech Talk

Helping children learn to their full potential

District Information Assistive Technology Team:

AT and Transition to College

Postsecondary Transition:

When a student is identified with special education needs in the elementary through high school grades, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires that he/she be provided with appropriate services to meet identified needs. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed each year and is implemented by teachers and special education professionals to address the student's educational needs and services. Unless the student continues to be served through a public school transition program until age 21, the IEP ends with the student's graduation from high school. At this transition time, it is up to the student to make a decision as to whether or not to disclose information about his/her disability to postsecondary programs, including colleges/technical colleges.

Postsecondary Accommodations:

As authorized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), colleges make reasonable accommodations available to any postsecondary student with a disability who is willing to disclose information about his/her disability. An accommodation is a support that gives the student an equal opportunity to participate and benefit from college. Accommodations are developed and approved though the Disability Services (DS) Office at the college. The student is required to provide DS with documentation of his/her disability as well as to give a history of accommodations and assistive technology supports used successfully in the past. Modifications that alter the fundamental requirement of a college course are not allowed.

Accommodations & Assistive Technology:

Assistive technology (AT) accommodations are equipment or systems that help the student with disabilities become more efficient and independent by performing functions that might otherwise be difficult, even impossible. Colleges offer a wide array of AT, so it is helpful for students to learn to use AT while in high school. Examples of AT that can be used in postsecondary settings include:

- Audio recordings of lectures;
- Electronic planners and calendars;
- Audio books;
- Note-taking systems;
- Talking and large-print word processors;
- Speech recognition programs;
- Screen readers;
- Captioning services; and
- Textbooks in alternative formats (e.g., braille, electronic)

Student Advocacy for AT:

A postsecondary student needs to advocate for him/herself. It is up to the student to meet with DS personnel, request accommodations, and notify them of any problems with implementation of accommodations. The student bears the responsibility for learning, while the professors serve as guides, mentors and resources. The school cannot communicate with parents without the student consent.

To learn more about how your child might benefit from transition AT tools, contact your child's IEP team leader

Using AT at Home
Postsecondary Transition Tools

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

IEP/Eval.
Students will need to share their IEP adaptations and special education evaluation with their chosen college.

Electronic Note Taker

Students can organize notes for study

Electronic Planner/ Calendar

Students can keep their schedules/ activities/ assignments organized

Parent Question

What steps should students take to get ready for college/technical college?

A student should review his/her transition plan with the school IEP team. AT documentation should be identified that accurately reflects the student's educational needs.

A student should make a list of AT tools needed for school success and be able to clearly communicate the tasks for which they are needed.

A student should not wait until senior year to find the right AT tool to serve his/her needs. If a tool has not been found that works, experimentation with different AT options may result in a solution.

When visiting colleges, the student can meet with a disability support services counselor to learn about available resources.

A student can visit college websites to become aware of application deadlines and required documentation required to qualify for use of AT accommodations.

Transition Student AT Tools

- "Hey, Can I Try That?" http://www.wati.org/content/supports/free/pdf/HeyCanITryThat08.pdf

- PAR (Protocol for Accommodations in Reading) Don Johnston: http://donjohnston.com/par/

- Research Project Calculator (Elm for You): https://rpc.elm4you.org/

- Student Information Guide for Self Determination and Assistive Technology Management (Student Transition Portfolio, WATI, pg. 16-19): http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/at-wati-student-portfolio.pdf

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Parent Question

What questions should the student ask about the availability of assistive supports when looking at prospective colleges/technical colleges?

The following questions are a sample to consider when evaluating AT supports across prospective institutions:

- What is the name of the office of disability support services at the college?
- What is required to be eligible for AT accommodations at this college?
- Does this college allow the use of AT tools for exams?
- Will the college make print materials available to me in accessible instructional formats?
- If I use screen-reading software, is the college web content compatible with my software? (For example, course registration software, library databases, class discussion boards and notes.)
- Who coordinates AT accommodations (during lectures, while doing assignments, and taking tests) between the professor and the disability office?

Informational Transition Resources

- Postsecondary Resource Guide: Successfully Preparing Students with Disabilities for The Postsecondary Environment by Minnesota State Colleges & Universities http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/pitechnicalTrainingMaterials.html

- Resources on AT resources and **transition to college:** www.understood.org www.ttacnews.vcu.edu/

- Assistive Technology and Transition (Canfield. T & Reed, P., WATI 2001): http://www.transitioncoalition.org/wp-content/originalSiteAssets/files/docs/attransitionpacket1224259340.pdf

- Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology in Post-Secondary Education (Accessible Technology Bulletin, Vol. 4, Issue 2, 2009: http://adagreatlakes.com/Publications/ATBulletin/Archives/Volume4%20Issue1.asp

- AT Planning – CTD: http://www.ctdinstitute.org/library/transition/transition-planning

- Family Roles in Post Secondary Planning: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4XHj1v7ApI

- Family Information Guide to AT and Transition Planning: https://www.autismspeaks.org/docs/family_services_docs/Technology.pdf