Skills to practice
with college bound students

Some students go away to school, others live at home and attend a local college. Either way, there are skills all will need to develop to live independently. This list is by no means inclusive, but does give some examples of the abilities students need to begin developing at a young age.

Time Management
Does the student wake up in the morning and get started on his own? Can he prioritize tasks that need to be accomplished? Can he break large tasks/assignments into smaller, more manageable components? Does the student meet deadlines? At college, students are responsible for being at class each day. Classes are frequently widely spread throughout the day and different days have different schedules. Meeting deadlines is very important.

Money Management
Does the student have skills in handling her own money? Does she understand how credit cards work? Does she have a checking and savings account? How will the cost of education be financed? At college, students need to budget and develop wise shopping skills. College is very expensive. Textbooks alone can cost hundreds of dollars. Meal plans, activity fees, insurance, school logo clothing, and a host of other, non-educational costs can be overwhelming.

Eating Habits
Does the student have an understanding of nutritional foods? Does he know how to prepare some simple, healthy meals? Does he know how to get bargains when shopping at a grocery store? At college, the traditional student gains 15 to 25 pounds during the freshman year. This is largely due to poor eating habits. Expensive junk food and quick meals replace healthy and nutritious ones. Also, poor eating habits can cause a student to be less energetic and productive.

Leisure Time
Does the student have hobbies? Is she willing to join groups when knowing none or few of the other members? Much of a successful college experience, especially when living on campus or away from home, is the social interaction among students. Colleges offer a wide variety of recreation and social activities. It is up to the student to take the initiative and join. No one will get them involved. They must accomplish that on their own.

Clothing and Hygiene
Does the student know how to separate clothes for washing? Does he understand washing and drying temperatures for various fabrics? Does he shower regularly and use deodorants and perfumes appropriately? Too much odor can socially isolate a student more quickly than almost anything else. It is important that the students take the initiative to wash themselves and their clothing regularly. To avoid ruinous expense or favorite clothing, the student should be well practiced in the use of a washing machine and dryer.

Home Alone
If "going away to college" has the student ever spent extended time away from home? Can she manage all the tasks of daily living without parental assistance? For students who leave home to attend college, homesickness and/or the need to care for oneself can be overwhelming. Living in a dorm or an apartment is far different and more demanding than living at home and doing a few chores.

Medical Needs
If on medication, can the student self-administer? Can the student self-advocate for special dietary or environmental needs? Does the student know who and how to contact assistance for medical or dental emergencies? Can he complete insurance forms without assistance? Many campuses have health clinics on site. Others have arrangements with clinics within the community, and some leave health and dental care solely as a student responsibility. Students, especially those with chronic medical issues, need to become familiar with the college's medical services. Pre-arrangements or action plans can be made with the assistance of the disability services coordinator, but ultimately the student will need to initiate assistance.

Financial Aid and Scholarships
Has the student applied for FAFSA? Multiple times? (First time applications are routinely rejected.) Has the student talked to her high school counselor about possible scholarship opportunities? Has the student talked with the admissions office at the college about possible financial aid packages or work programs? Has the family completed the FAFSA application? As already stated, college can be very expensive, but there is help available for those that are persistent. Colleges can help, but financial aid is something that needs to be dealt with before the student arrives on campus. Most financial aid and scholarship deadlines are six to nine months before the college semester begins.
You're not in Kansas anymore.

If you thought that going from elementary school to high school was a big change, get ready! The differences between college and high school can be overwhelming, but they can also be very exciting. They can scare and intimidate you, or they can free you to become your own person, in charge of what you do. The key is to understand the differences so that you are prepared for them.

The following is a comparison between high school and college.

Though not every possible area has been covered, there is enough variety so that you should get a pretty good feeling for how college operates.

On the left hand side of the page is a "characteristic" of high school. Directly across the page, on the right is how that same "characteristic" works in college. Be prepared to learn!

**High School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Following the rules in high school</th>
<th>College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending high school is mandatory.</td>
<td>Being responsible in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ time is structured by others.</td>
<td>Attending college is voluntary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students need permission to participate in extra curricular activities.</td>
<td>Students decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults will remind students of responsibilities and help set priorities.</td>
<td>Students balance their own responsibilities and set priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most classes are arranged for the student.</td>
<td>Students schedule their own classes with the help of an advisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.</td>
<td>Graduation requirements are complicated and frequently change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are usually corrected if their behavior is out of line.</td>
<td>The student is expected to know what applies to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to high school classes</td>
<td>Succeeding in college classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes generally have no more than 35 students.</td>
<td>Classes may have more than 100 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students proceed from one class directly to the next.</td>
<td>Students often have several hours between classes which may be scheduled throughout the day and evening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students usually spend 6 hours a day (30 a week) in class.</td>
<td>Students attend 2 to 4 classes a day (12 to 16 per week).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance is taken.</td>
<td>Attendance may or may not be taken, but professors know who misses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks are provided at little or no expense.</td>
<td>Textbooks are expensive and usually cost between $300 - $600 per semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifications that change course rigors, volume, or outcomes may be offered based upon the IEP.</td>
<td>Modifications that change rigor, volume, or outcomes will not be offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required classes are the same for all students and dictated by the state.</td>
<td>Classes are based upon field of study and requirements vary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school teachers</td>
<td>College professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers remind students of incomplete work</td>
<td>Professors do NOT remind students of incomplete work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers approach students if they feel they need help.</td>
<td>Professors expect students to approach them if assistance is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are often available for conversation before and after class.</td>
<td>Professors keep office hours and students must schedule appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in providing knowledge to students in the best ways possible.</td>
<td>Professors are experts in their fields but have not always been trained as teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers provide students with missed information if they are absent.</td>
<td>Professors expect students to get missed information from their classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers present materials to help students understand what is in the textbooks.</td>
<td>Professors may not follow test books. Students are expected to read books on their own. Lectures enhance the books and students make the connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers often write information on the board so that students know what to copy into their notes.</td>
<td>Professors may lecture non-stop, expecting students to decide what is important to put into notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers provide knowledge and acts leading students through the thinking process.</td>
<td>Professors expect students to think independently and make the connections between topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers often take time to remind students of assignments and due dates.</td>
<td>Professors expect students to read, save, and refer to course syllabus (outline) and to keep track of dates and assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High School vs. College

Special education in high school (IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) (FAPE, Free and Appropriate Public Education) Services cover birth to age 21, or until a high school diploma is attained. Students receive special education and related services based upon identified needs. Behavior can be viewed as a manifestation of the disability Accommodations and modifications are communicated to the teacher by the case manager. The environment is adjusted to the student. Services are delivered to the student. The school informs the parents of the student's progress. The case manager and/or parent act as the student's advocate. Schools are required to identify students with disabilities through free assessments. Services may include individually designed instruction, curriculum modifications, and accommodations based upon the IEP. Schools assist students with making connections with community resources. There are regular meetings to discuss the student's progress. Assessment, physical therapy, and personal care are provided by the school while the student is in school. High school is mandatory and free.

Disability services in college 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Covers students with disabilities regardless of age, based upon non-discrimination. Formal special education services are not available. Student must meet essential educational, behavioral, and other standards. Students must request accommodations and confer with professors. The student must adjust to the environment. Students must seek out services. The school cannot communicate with the parents without the student's permission. The student is their own advocate. Students are responsible for revealing their disability and providing current documentation. Only reasonable accommodations are available. Students are responsible for making their own connections with community resources. Students are responsible for personal service and care as well as medical and related requirements. College is involuntary and very expensive.

Studying in high school Students may stay as little as 0.2 hours per week and this may be mostly to get ready for a test. Students often need to hear or read material only once to learn all they need to about the topic. Students read short assignments that are then discussed and often rewritten in class. Students are frequently told what they need to learn from assigned readings.

Studying in college Students need to study at least 2 to 3 hours for each hour of class. Students need to continually review class notes and text materials. Students may be assigned large amounts of reading and writing that may not be talked about in class. It is up to students to understand what must be learned from reading assignments.

Tests in high school Tests are frequent and usually cover only a small amount of material. Make up tests are often available. Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflicts with school events. Teachers frequently conduct reviews prior to test days. Mastery is usually determined by the student's ability to repeat what they have been told or read.

Tests in college Tests are often infrequent and may cover large amounts of material going back to the beginning of the course. Make up tests are almost never allowed. Professors generally schedule tests without regard to school events or other classes. Professors rarely offer review sessions. If they do, they are frequent and scheduled at a different time and run by teacher assistants. Mastery is determined by the student’s ability to apply what they have been told or read to new situations.

High school grades Most assignments receive grades. Good homework grades may help to raise poor test scores. Extra credit options are usually available to raise a grade. Initial tests are often not counted, especially if they are low.

Grades in college Assigned work may or may not be graded. Tests and major papers provide the majority of the grade, but grade may be lowered if homework is not done. Extra credit options are not available to raise a grade. First tests let you know what is expected of you and what types of tests the professor uses.
Post-secondary enrollment timeline

what to do when

Each year – beginning at age 14:

* Attend your IEP meeting and gradually assume more responsibility for conducting it. Your plan is being developed. You need to be a part of the planning, as a part of the IEP meeting:
  ___ Review your post high school goals in the five transition areas.
  ___ Talk about your graduation plans. (Do you plan to graduate with your age peers?)
  ___ Review your graduation status. (Are you passing classes and getting the credits you need?)
  ___ Schedule your classes. What classes are best or necessary for you to take? Should substitutions be made?)
* Maintain a filing system (PR#file) to organize all information related to school, work, activities, etc.

During your 9th grade (freshman) year:

* Learn about your disability and be able to explain it to others.
* Learn what accommodations are and which will help you to be successful.
* Know how you learn best; understand your learning style.
* Review and adjust your future goals in the five transition areas.
* Begin career exploration. Take career aptitudes and interest inventories.
* Practice being a good student. Learn to be organized, independent and to manage your time.
* Participate in extracurricular activities (athletic and non-athlete).
* Participate in your IEP meeting.

During your 10th grade (sophomore) year:

* Begin to explore colleges (programs/degrees, entrance requirements, graduation requirements).
* Take classes that will prepare you for college.
* Practice requesting your own accommodations. Do not let your case manager do it for you.
* Actively plan your IEP meeting with your case manager. Plan to speak on your own behalf at the meeting.
* With the help of your case manager, investigate other service providers that you can contact for assistance after graduation.
* Build your resume. Continue involvement in your school’s activities and participate in volunteer work. All scholarship and entrance applications place importance on student involvement.
* Talk with the counselor about college, career choices, and preparing for entrance exams.
* Begin career exploration activities (skill inventories, career aptitude, career investigation).

During your 11th grade (junior) year:

* Narrow your career choices and match them to college programs.
* Invite outside agencies that provide assistance after graduation to your IEP meeting (rehab services, social worker, Center for Independent Living, etc.).
* Understand “the age of majority” statement in your IEP and what it means.
* Assist your case manager in planning and running your IEP meeting and in writing your IEP.
* Explore assistive technology that might be helpful in college.
* Practice “self-determination” skills – learn when, how, and if to disclose your disability to others.
* Develop good time management and study skills. Become as academically independent as possible.
* Talk with the counselor about scholarships, financial aid programs, and college in high school programs.
* Take the ACT and/or SAT and/or the student assessment test (commonly ACCUPLACER) in the spring.
* Take the Armed Forces ASVAB test – an excellent career aptitude activity.
* Continue to build your work, activities and volunteerism resume.
* Begin visiting college campuses.
* Plan a visit to several schools by contacting the disability services coordinator for arrangements.
During your 12th grade (senior) year:

* Immediately begin a “Graduation File.” Keep copies of all information about you that will be needed during the year. Contents may vary based upon your goals, but if you are going to college, the following categories are minimal:
  - College applications
  - Disability verification and accommodation
  - Scholarships
  - Financial aid
  - Other agency contacts
  - Recommendations
  - High school records

* If necessary, retake the ACT, SAT or ACCUPLACER in the fall.
* Complete college applications (most can be entirely or partially completed on line). Earlier is better; generally in the fall, but check college websites for deadlines.
* Applications are not free. Generally they cost $20 or more. The fee may be waived if you have financial need.
* Have a parent or case manager proof read the application before submitting.
* Place a copy of your file.
* Prepare a “disability confirmation” packet. In order to access accommodations you need to verify that you have a disability.
  - Contact the disability coordinator. Verification requirements differ by school.
  - A current (within 3 years) evaluation report.
  - A current IEP. The college will be especially interested in the adaptations section
  - Medical and/or outside the school evaluations reports.

* Create a high school records folder, include:
  - Transcripts
  - ACT or ACCUPLACER scores.
  - Lists of activities (school and non-school) that you’ve participated in and what years.
  - Lists of volunteer activities by year.
  - List of awards or recognitions.
  - Identify hobbies or leisure activities.
  - Contact a few teachers and members of the community. If necessary, request a written recommendation.
  - Put their names and addresses in the file.

* Apply for scholarships. You do not have to be an honor student to get a scholarship. Many are based on participation or volunteering. Some are related to your parents’ employment or your racial heritage or your disability.
  - Talk to the counselor about ones appropriate for you.
  - Search the web. There are sites that will send you scholarship information based on questions you complete.
  - NEVER pay for a scholarship search.
  - All the good ones are FREE.
  - Place copies in your file.

* Apply for financial aid. Even if you do not qualify for grants or loans, you will probably get access to work-study programs.
  - Talk to your counselor. They can help you complete a free federal financial aid application called FAFSA.
  - It is fastest to complete the application online.
  - Parents must include their income tax information so it cannot be completed before February.

* Visit the college before you accept admission. You cannot tell if a place is good for you by what is on paper. You need to visit the campus. Contact the disabilities service coordinator.

* Review the "high school vs. college" pages. Talk about the differences with your case manager.

* Make your senior year as close to college as you can:
  - Take challenging academic classes without modification.
  - Use only accommodations available at college and use them only upon request by you.
  - Be able to explain your disabilities and describe the accommodations that work best for you.
  - Be accountable for timelines and due dates.

* Run your IEP meeting.
**Asking the questions**

**Questions to ask the college**

The disability services at secondary educational institutions vary greatly. During your college visits, you should make an appointment with the disabilities service coordinator to discuss the college’s program. Some questions you might ask are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What documentation is necessary for accessing disability services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of services are available?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the college offer courses that help students with disabilities make the transition from high school to college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is in charge of providing services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do students go to access services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a place or program where students can “drop in” to get help when needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many students receive disability services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are professors informed that students qualify for disability services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a support group for students with disabilities on campus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are tutoring services available? If so, is there a cost involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How responsive are professors to working with students who have disabilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the college provide any adaptive technology/equipment for student use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are students with disabilities given early class registration privileges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I choose to attend, how early, before I begin, should I meet with the disability coordinator?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Answering the questions**

**Questions you should ask yourself**

With or without disabilities, a large number of students who begin college do not finish. Some change their career path; some find college too difficult; some arrive unprepared; some simply do not like the experience.

College is a challenge. Motivation, preparation, and self-advocacy are key ingredients for success. The rewards and opportunities are many, but so are the obstacles and difficulties. Before you commit to college, you might want to ask yourself these questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do I want to go to college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I prepared to spend several hours a day studying?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I be able to approach people I do not know well to ask for assistance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is my career goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are my strengths as a student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will I do with my “free” time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I be organized enough to keep track of assignment and testing schedules?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of classes will be the most difficult for me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will I be motivated to attend classes no matter when they are scheduled?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accommodations Worksheet

When meeting with the disability coordinator from a post-secondary school, it is very important that you be able to describe the accommodations you feel that you need. Though the accommodations provided in high school may not necessarily be available in college, the disability coordinator can best help you if you can discuss your needs and what has helped in the past.

This worksheet will help you more clearly understand what the appropriate accommodations for your disability might be. Remember, you will only be eligible for accommodations that relate directly to your identified educational needs.

What is your disability?

Has your case manager helped you identify your stated educational needs from your IEP or Assessment Summary Report? Write them here:

Read the “Adaptations” section of your IEP. Write down what accommodations and modifications are identified in that document.

For the next five questions, use the following key:
0 = did not try 1 = very helpful 2 = not very helpful

1. During your years in high school, when you needed extra assistance with a difficult class, what helped?
   - taped lectures
   - extra time on assignments
   - having someone take notes for you
   - being given an alternate or different test/assignment
   - having a tutor
   - going to the resource room for help
   - being allowed to complete assignments with another student
   - other (please list)

2. When taking a test, what seemed to help?
   - getting extra time
   - taking the test in another room
   - having the test read to you
   - having someone write down the answers you provided
   - having the teacher tell the answers
   - being allowed to use notes
   - other, please list

3. To help with difficulty in reading, what worked?
   - using books on taped or CD versions of text books
   - having handouts read to you
   - receiving outlines or study guides ahead of time
   - receiving vocabulary guides ahead of time
   - being given extra time to read the assignments
   - other (please list)

4. To help with difficulty in writing, what helped?
   - having someone scribe (write down) for you
   - doing all writing using a computer
   - presenting your reports orally
   - having a proofreader
   - recording your answers or ideas on tape
   - other (please list)

5. If you have difficulty with organization and turning assignments in on time, what helped?
   - having an assignment book
   - having teachers check your assignment sheets
   - having your case manager check and remind you
   - receiving extra time to do assignments
   - turning in small parts of a large assignment over time
   - other, please list:

Whether or not they are listed in your IEP or even if your teachers knew what they were, list any other things that you did or that were provided for you that helped you be successful in school.

On page 10, to the right, there is a list of accommodations that colleges routinely make available to students with disabilities. Based upon what you have written in this section, discuss with your case manager which post-secondary accommodations you feel would best meet your educational needs.
Accommodations and Self-Advocacy

What is an accommodation?

What does "self-advocacy" mean to you?

The disability services coordinator is the person at the college with whom you need to meet to talk about what accommodations are appropriate and available for you. You, however, are the person who is responsible for following through on the accommodations and talking to the professors about them if that is necessary.

Pretend that your case manager is the college disability service coordinator. Explain what accommodations have worked for you and how they are related to your disability.

Practice. Pick a classroom teacher with whom you feel comfortable. Arrange to meet him/her outside of class. Explain your disabilities and talk about accommodations. Follow through on the agreed upon accommodations without assistance by your case manager.

For the next three questions, use the following key:
0 = never
1 = rarely
2 = sometimes
3 = usually
4 = almost always

1. If you are having difficulty with an assignment, who is the person you generally ask for help?
   ___ parent
   ___ classmate
   ___ teacher
   ___ special education teacher/case manager
   ___ no one

2. When you need help, do you:
   ___ take initiative and ask for help in a positive way
   ___ make your needs plainly understood
   ___ keep it to yourself and get through it as best you can
   ___ not do the work

3. How do you feel about letting others know that you have a disability?
   (There is no correct answer but think about the “pros” and “cons” of each answer you might check.) I would:
   ___ keep it to myself and not tell anyone
   ___ tell only a disability coordinator before I started college
   ___ tell a professor only if I was having trouble passing the class
   ___ tell people ahead of time so they would know from the beginning
   ___ tell others only if I started having problems

Common Accommodations offered by most colleges

Each accommodation plan is arranged on a case-by-case basis, though services vary a great deal with each institution, they generally include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptive Equipment:</th>
<th>Adaptive Software:</th>
<th>Assistive Listening Devices:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note takers</td>
<td>Audio tapes</td>
<td>Quiet test site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended test time</td>
<td>Scrbes</td>
<td>Readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlargements</td>
<td>Closed captioning</td>
<td>Interpreter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks on tape</td>
<td>Early registration</td>
<td>Proofreaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Style & Study Habits

Everybody learns different ways and at different speeds. It is important to understand how you learn best. There are three basic ways that people learn new information: seeing (visual), hearing (auditory), and doing (kinesthetic). A visual learner might prefer to learn by watching a video; an auditory learner by listening to a lecture; a kinesthetic learner by building a model. Some learning methods contain more than one learning style. For example, taking notes can be both visual and kinesthetic.

Your case manager will have several different tests that can help in determining your learning style. Knowing your learning style will let you understand how you can most easily acquire new information and what ways will be most difficult. The few questions that follow are not meant to be a learning styles assessment. They are simply presented to get you to start thinking about how you learn, and so that you have an idea of the types of questions an assessment will ask.

Circle the word that indicates how likely you are to use the methods listed.

1. When you learn something new, do you prefer to:
   - Read a book?
   - Watch a demonstration?
   - Listen to a lecture?
   - Take notes?
   - See a video?
   - Do an experiment?

   Rarely—sometimes—usually—almost always

2. To show what you have learned, do you prefer to:
   - Write a report?
   - Do a project?
   - Talk about it?
   - Make a drawing or chart?
   - Take a test?

   Rarely—sometimes—usually—almost always

3. If you need to memorize information, what seems to work:
   - Write it down?
   - Repeat it out loud?
   - Make charts, lists, graphs?
   - Make mental pictures?
   - Match it with what you do know?

   Rarely—sometimes—usually—almost always

Developing good study and organizational habits are extremely important for success in post-secondary schools. Place the number corresponding to the frequency of your current study habits on the line in front of the statement. When finished, compare your answers with statements in the section that talks about how high school and college are different.

0 = never
1 = rarely
2 = sometimes
3 = usually
4 = almost always

When you study do you
___ Set aside a certain amount of time to study every night
___ Not study at all.
___ Use your study hall time in school to get assignments done.
___ Study only the night before tests.
___ Study just enough to get passing grades.
___ Study only the subjects you like.

What is the average number of hours you study per week? _____

To keep track of assignments, do you
___ Use an assignment book or day planner
___ Ask classmates when assignments are due.
___ Expect the teacher to remind you.
___ Have a daily assignment sheet that your teacher signs.
___ Rely on your case manager to remember for you.
___ Hand in assignments late.

If you receive a large assignment that is due at the end of the quarter/semester, do you
___ Complete it as soon as you can.
___ Break it into smaller pieces and do them over the whole time.
___ Rush to get it finished a day or two before it is due.
___ Forget about it and turn it in late.

If you are given a large reading assignment or chapter to read out of a textbook, do you
___ Read the assignment and take notes.
___ Read the assignment and highlight important sections.
___ Have someone read the assignment to you.
___ Ask someone what the assignment was about.
___ Not read the assignment.

In a lecture class, do you
___ Take notes from what the teacher says.
___ Take only the notes the teacher writes on the board.
___ Copy someone else's notes.
___ Not take notes.
Prepare yourself

What students need to do to prepare for postsecondary education

Answering your “whys”

Know your disability
If you understand your disability, you will know where difficulties will arise and be better prepared to deal with them. You will be able to explain it to others in words they understand and can then more easily advocate for yourself. If you do not understand your disability, you will not be able to request accommodations that will make success more likely.

Know your learning style.
If you know how you learn best, you will learn more and you will learn it more quickly.

Know what accommodations work well for you and why.
There are literally hundreds of possible accommodations, but if you do not know the ones that help you learn, they will be of no benefit. You should know why they work because people will ask you to justify providing them for you.

Be involved with or run your IEP meetings.
It is your educational plan, not your teacher’s or your parent’s, and if you do not care enough to be involved, why should anyone else? It is also good practice for taking control of your life and making your own decisions.

Take tough academic classes your senior year.
Colleges and technical schools will be academically challenging and will have strict graduation requirements. If you do not challenge yourself in high school, you will not be successful in college. It is a fact that reading and math requirements for many tech programs are higher than for teacher education programs. College programs do not reduce requirements because of a disability.

Talk to your teachers about the accommodations you need.
In college or employment, no one will advocate for you. You must do it yourself. The earlier you begin to practice talking to people about what you need to be successful, the easier it will become and the better you will be at it. Practice now when a job or a college credit do not depend on it.

Take the ACT or PSAT. Retake if not satisfied with the results. They are required for four year colleges. Even if you plan to attend a community college or technical program, it might be a good idea to take one or the other (probably the ACT) to see how well you do. They can tell you how your skills compare with other college bound students. Accommodations are available.

Use a planner or assignment notebook.
When you attend college it will be essential. You will have different classes on different days. Assignments will be given weeks before they are due and reminders not given. Tests will be scheduled for times and even places other than class. Late assignments are frequently not accepted. In short, if you do not write down what is due, for whom, when, in what format, etc., you will mess up. So start using a planner now to get into the habit.

Turn in all assignments on time.
In high school, teachers give you reminders and lots of time. That is not the case in college. Professors expect you to be responsible. Being responsible is a learned skill, so start now.

Visit at least two different colleges.
Colleges frequently “feel” different than they look on paper. Many students report that they changed their opinion about their “first choice” college after visiting it. The opposite is also true. Find colleges that have the programs you are interested in and then visit. This will often make picking the right place much easier.

Take career assessment and interest inventories.
It saves you time and money in the long run. Even though people frequently change majors, jobs, careers, and end up working in areas that have nothing to do with what they studied, it is a good idea to know what you want to do, or at least what you are good at, before you enter college. College was free, it would not matter because education is always a good thing. But it is expensive, so the quicker you can complete what you need to, or the less often you change your mind about what you want to do, the cheaper the process will be.

Talk to your counselor about scholarships and financial aid.
College is expensive, and financial assistance will be very helpful. Scholarships do not necessarily require high grades or high ACT scores. Many are available for students with GPAs of 2.5 or better, but usually require a great deal of community involvement or volunteer service. There are a variety available, however. There is a scholarship awarded for the best prom outfit made from duct tape, so check with your counselor to see what you might be eligible for, and then take the time to complete the applications.

Apply to at least two different colleges.
Things happen to change your mind. After you have visited several colleges and have narrowed down where you wish to attend to two or three schools that have the educational program you want and a campus you like, apply to them all. Being accepted to two schools gives you options. Also, if you are not accepted at your first choice, you will already have applied at your second choice.

Work at a part-time job.
It is good practice for being responsible, interacting with people, and being on time. In college you will have a lot of hours before, after, or between classes, and even though much of that time will need to be spent studying, a part-time job and source of income will be very helpful.