


**NAVIGATING THE COLLEGE
PROCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH
LEARNING DIFFERENCES**

WHO IS ATTENDING COLLEGE

- Increase in students with learning disabilities attending college
 - Increase in students with physical disabilities attending college
 - Increase in students with mental health issues attending college
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A SHIFT

More than ever before, students with a wide range of learning disabilities and mental health issues attend college and universities

29.6% of first year college students have disclosed they have a learning disability

35% of first year college students have a mental health problem that interferes with daily life



COLLEGE SEARCH


Identify Goals

- What do I want to do after college?
- What do I want to accomplish in college?

Identify Needs


- What specific needs does the student have in order to be successful in college?
- What will the college need to provide?

Identify “Wants”

- What type of learning environment does the student desire? (i.e. small classes, relationships with professors)
 - What college setting does the student want? (i.e. rural v. urban, large v. small, liberal arts v. research university)
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PROGRAM VS. SERVICES

Disability Support Program

- Only available at select colleges which offer it
(see handout for examples)
 - Often have separate application
 - Documentation required when applying to college
 - SAT/ACT may not be required for college admission
 - Additional fee may be charged for program
 - Communication between program staff and teaching faculty
 - Content tutoring done by tutors who are disability specialists
 - Appointments may be scheduled by program staff
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PROGRAM VS. SERVICES

Sample Program Elements (select schools)

- Weekly academic coaching sessions with learning specialist
 - Learning strategies
 - Organizational skills
 - Time management
 - Self advocacy
 - Priority course registration
 - Extended course withdrawal period
 - Summer Program
 - Credit bearing courses with skills development content
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PROGRAM VS. SERVICES

Disability Support Services

- Available at all colleges
 - No application required
 - Documentation supplied after acceptance
 - SAT/ACT required as per admissions standards
(Massachusetts State schools will waive SAT/ACT with IEP/testing)
 - No fees to utilize services
 - Communication between faculty and program staff only in specific instances
 - Strategy based skills assistance provided by Learning Specialists
 - Appointments are student initiated
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PROGRAM VS. SERVICES

Examples of services provided (all schools)

- Visual or hearing impairment technology devices
 - Recorded texts or other assistive technology
 - Note-takers
 - Scribes for exams
 - ASL interpreters
 - Separate location for exams
 - Extended time for exams
 - Classroom relocation
 - Accessible or preferential classroom seating
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PREPARING TO APPLY

Visit each school-All students are encouraged to visit each school before applying

Request copies of any school-based evaluations (IEP students) – copies are requested through Office of Pupil Personnel at Central Office

Contact the Disability Services Office at each school

- **Determine services provided**
- **Discuss Documentation Guidelines(see sample on handout)**

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Learning Disability (Recommended Guidelines)

- Psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluation by a certified or licensed evaluator
- Battery completed within the past three years (length may differ at different schools)
- Statement of diagnosis of a specific learning disability
- Battery of assessments generally must include
 - Diagnostic Interview
 - Aptitude Test (WAIS-R, Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive)
 - Academic Achievement Test (WIAT, Woodcock-Johnson Achievement)
 - Summary with recommendations and rationale

APPLICATION PROCESS

Complete application process as stated on the college's Admissions webpage


Contact Admissions office to ask:

- if/where/when to submit testing
- How to document foreign language exemption if available and applicable

Submit separate application if applying to a Disability Support Program (separate service as discussed above)

ONCE YOU ARE IN...

Make an appointment with Disability Service staff to discuss:

- Ensuring sufficient documentation
 - Timeline for determining/applying for services
 - Steps to ensure continuation of services each semester
 - Responsibilities of student, faculty, Disability Services staff
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