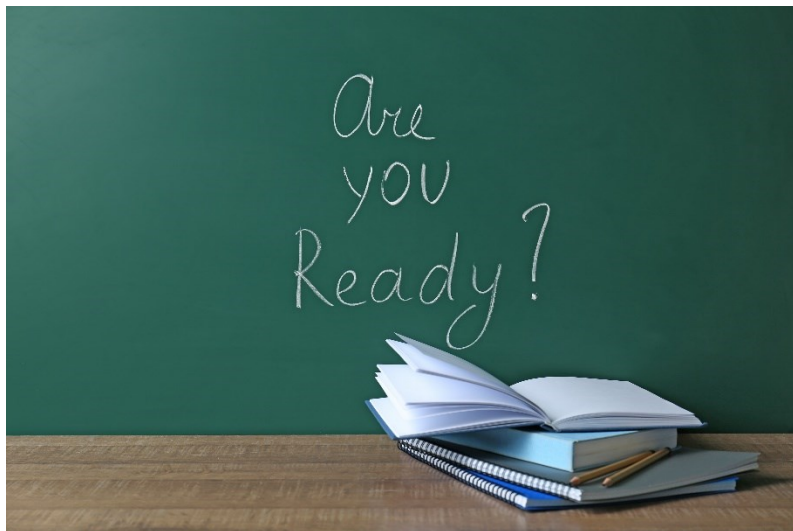




# College Ready, Here We Come!

## A Checklist for Identifying Skills Needed to Be Ready for Postsecondary Education



Getting ready to attend postsecondary education institutions after high school, such as colleges and universities, community colleges, vocational schools, and transition programs, can be a challenging process. This checklist is designed to help youth with disabilities identify tasks that need to be completed in order to be ready to attend postsecondary education programs and to be successful in the postsecondary environment.

Remember that it will be important to reach out to the Disability Support Services (DSS) at your chosen institution for personalized assistance and accommodations that are tailored to your needs. Postsecondary education is a journey, and with the right skills and support, youth with disabilities can achieve their educational goals and beyond. Remember that there is a lot of assistance available to you from your high school counselor, your vocational rehabilitation counselor, and your Disability Support Services counselor, as well as friends and family. Ask for help when needed so that you can be successful in your postsecondary education experience.

**Directions:** Check off each skill that has been mastered under each area. Unmarked skills can serve as a guide to creating transition goals for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or other goal plans. After the unmarked skill has been mastered, check it off as well.

### **Area: Decide What You Want to Study**

Deciding what you want to study is important because it will influence what type of program and what type of institution you will enroll in.

#### **Skills:**

- ☐ Think about your interests and career goals
- ☐ Choose a field of study or major that excites you
- ☐ Find out what type of institution offers that field of study/major
- ☐ Find out the type of courses that are needed for that field/major

## **Area: Research Different Types of Institutions**

Look into the different types of institutions that offer postsecondary education opportunities.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Look for institutions that offer your chosen program
- ☐ Check to see if the institutions offer the support services you need for your disability.
- ☐ Look at the different types of postsecondary education institutions to see which best meets your needs

## **Area: Prepare Academically**

Be sure that you are academically prepared for the program you would like to pursue.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Make sure you are taking the necessary high school courses for your program/major
- ☐ Make sure your grades are high enough to meet admission requirements for your chosen program

## **Area: Take Standardized Tests**

Some programs require specific standardized tests for entry into the program, such as the ACT or SAT.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Identify what standardized tests are required for admission to the institutions you are considering
- ☐ Find out what accommodations you might be eligible to use on the test
- ☐ Prepare for taking the needed standardized test(s)
- ☐ Register for and take the needed standardized test(s)
- ☐ Know what score is needed for admission to the institutions you are considering

## **Area: Gather Important Documents**

Identify and collect any needed information to apply to your program.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Get a copy of your high school transcript
- ☐ Ask appropriate people for letters of recommendation
- ☐ Get evidence of any volunteer or community experiences
- ☐ Get copies of disability documentation such as IEPs, 504 Plans, medical records, and eligibility determination

## **Area: Apply to Institution(s)**

Complete the application process.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Fill out applications for the institution(s) you would like to attend
- ☐ Pay attention to application deadlines
- ☐ Pay application fees, if any

## **Area: Apply for Financial Aid**

There are many opportunities to get assistance with the cost of postsecondary education.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- ☐ Look for scholarships and grants you can apply for
- ☐ Schedule an appointment with a school guidance counselor to find out opportunities for local scholarships
- ☐ Research information needed for scholarship applications
- ☐ Seek out assistance to write and proof any scholarship application essays

## **Area: Visit Institution(s)**

Go on visits to the postsecondary institutions you are considering to see if you like the campus and atmosphere.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Go on campus tours to see if it's the right fit
- ☐ Talk to professors, students, and Disability Support Services (DSS) counselors
- ☐ Talk to an admissions counselor

## **Area: Choose an Institution**

Make a decision about which postsecondary institution you will attend.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Review acceptance letters to determine which institutions you are eligible to attend
- ☐ Compare any financial aid offers to see which one is the best fit for you
- ☐ Choose the institution whose programs and available financial aid best fit your needs

## **Area: Plan for Accommodations**

Postsecondary institutions offer accommodations for students with disabilities through the Disability Support Services (DSS) office.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Make an appointment with your chosen institution's Disability Support Services (DSS) office
- ☐ Ask what documentation you need to provide to show proof of a disability
- ☐ Discuss with the DSS counselor what accommodations will be of benefit to you
- ☐ Discuss how to request your accommodations from your professor/teacher

## **Area: Attend Orientation**

Most postsecondary institutions have an orientation that students are required to attend.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Attend an orientation session on your chosen campus
- ☐ Tour the campus
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with campus resources like counseling services, Disability Support Services (DSS), Peer Tutoring, Financial Aid, Student Life, Library, etc.

## **Area: Register for Classes**

Most postsecondary institutions will require you to register for your classes online.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Meet with an advisor to select what classes you will need to take
- ☐ Learn how to navigate the online registration portal
- ☐ Register for classes

## **Area: Arrange for Housing and/or Transportation**

Some students will live on campus and some will live off-campus, either at home or an off-campus living arrangement. If you live off campus, you will need to have transportation to and from on-campus classes.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Decide where you will live as you pursue your education
- ☐ If living on-campus, make arrangements with campus housing, especially if any accommodations are needed
- ☐ If living off-campus, find a place to live that is affordable and if needed, accessible

- ☐ Plan how you will get to and from school if you are living at home or off-campus
- ☐ If you will have your own transportation, ensure you obtain any required parking permits needed to park in a campus parking lot

## **Area: Begin Your Classes**

Your classes will be listed on your course schedule and list what days, times, and locations where they will meet. Finding assistance when you struggle will help you to be successful.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Identify the days and times of your classes
- ☐ Identify the locations of your classes
- ☐ If you will be receiving accommodations in any of your classes, introduce yourself to the instructor and ask for those accommodations
- ☐ If you experience any difficulties within your classes, be sure to:
  - speak with the instructor
  - seek out any tutoring opportunities available
  - speak to your DSS counselor for assistance
  - use the accommodations you have available
- ☐ Find study methods that work for you

## **Area: Self-Advocacy Skills**

Speaking up for yourself and asking for help will be very important in the postsecondary environment, as your parent can no longer advocate for you.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Practice speaking up for yourself
- ☐ Ask for help when needed
- ☐ Explain your disability and accommodation needs
- ☐ Ask for and use your available accommodations
- ☐ Understand your rights under disability laws
- ☐ Use email and office hours to ask questions
- ☐ Use clear and effective communication with your professors and peers

## **Area: Time Management and Organizational Skills**

Keeping up with assignments, due dates, and schedules will be important for your success in the postsecondary environment.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Create a schedule for your classes and study time
- ☐ Use tools like calendars and reminders

- ☐ Keep track of assignments and deadlines
- ☐ Use folders or digital tools to organize notes and materials
- ☐ Set aside time daily to study
- ☐ Attend classes on time
- ☐ Attend all classes unless you have an excused illness

## **Area: Financial Preparation**

Financial Aid may not cover all the costs of tuition and fees, books, housing, transportation, food, and other living expenses associated with attending a postsecondary institution. Planning is needed to ensure all anticipated expenses are covered.

### **Skills:**

- ☐ Find out the total cost of all anticipated expenses related to attending your institution, including tuition and fees, books, housing, transportation costs, food, and other living expenses
- ☐ Determine the amount of financial aid available, if any
- ☐ Determine the amount of expenses not covered by financial aid
- ☐ Determine how the remaining expenses will be paid, such as a part-time job, parent funding, private student loan, savings account, etc.

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