

In college, **YOU** are responsible for getting the help you need. You must be able to advocate for yourself. **Advocates** are people who know what they want and will stand up for their rights. Making each of the following 5 steps a habit will help you to be a good self-advocate and a successful student.

1. Know Yourself and Your Disability

Before you can advocate for yourself, you need to identify your:

- **Strengths** – the skills I do well right now

My strengths are: _____

- **Areas to improve** - the skills I need to achieve in order to realize success

My weaknesses are: _____

- **Interests** – the career areas I may want to explore

My interests are: _____

- **Preferences** – the ways I like to learn

The ways I learn best are: _____

You also need to know how to talk about your disability in a way that other people will understand. Do you know what your disability is?

My disability is: _____

Where is your official documentation or paperwork that explains your disability? Make sure you have a copy of your most recent assessment and IEP before high school graduation and keep this file available to receive accommodations in college.

The college or school has my documentation so that I can get the accommodations that will help me succeed: YES NO **

**** If no, this should be one of your immediate priorities.**

2. Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

Colleges cannot close their doors to you because you have a disability; they must provide services that will allow you equal access to courses, programs, and events. Please refer to the brochure entitled "Rights and Responsibilities for Students with Disabilities." It has more information on this topic.

My responsibilities are: _____

My rights are: _____

3. Help Plan for College

A very important part of being a successful student is the ability to know when you need help. Writing down the names and phone numbers of the people on campus who will help you, including staff in the office for students with disabilities, is a good idea.

The people I can go to for help are:

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Name: _____
Phone: _____
Name: _____
Phone: _____

4. Take Action

One of the ways you can reach your goals in college is by being able to talk with your instructor about your disability. Before doing so, however, you may want to practice with your parents, your case manager, or a friend. It may seem intimidating to speak with college instructors, but practice and preparation will give you confidence. When you are ready, schedule a meeting with your instructor(s).

These ideas can make the meeting with your instructor(s) go more smoothly:

- Write some notes about what you want to say so you have a guideline for your conversation.
- Talk with you instructor before the semester starts.
- Schedule a private meeting in his/her office.
- Be prepared to discuss your disability.
- Be ready to refer the instructor(s) to the disability services staff if they need more information than you have.
- Be confident! You know yourself better than anyone.
- Thank your instructor(s) for meeting with you.

5. Manage Your Time Wisely... Build the Skills Needed for College

One of the best ways to be a successful student is to use your time wisely.

Planning your time each day will help you to stay on track. Some people like to carry a calendar or planner with them to help organize their day. Other people make "to do" lists and cross off tasks as they are completed. You need to use the strategy that works best for you to remain organized.

Estimate how long you need to accurately complete your school tasks and set that time aside **each day**. Give yourself extra time to work on homework to make sure that you do a good job.

Do you know how long you need to study before you take tests? If you wait until the last minute, you might not have enough time to get your mind ready for your test.

Do you have sufficient study skills? If you learned study strategies in high school, review the suggestions on various ways to study and retain information. If you didn't learn study skills or feel more information is necessary, consider taking a study skills course at your college.

How are your computer skills? If you are not familiar with computers or type slowly, consider taking a keyboarding class. Assess your strengths and weaknesses and take action to be as prepared as possible for the college experience.

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**This brochure is available in
alternate formats upon request.**



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Self-Advocacy

Steps you can take to help you
be a successful student



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