



Does your child want to continue their education after high school? Postsecondary education means any education pursued after completing high school. Options for are increasingly accessible for people on the autism spectrum.

### What are the educational options for my child after high school?

- Four-year college or university
- Community college
- Vocational/technical/trade school
- Life skills/independent living programs

Your child can be a **full-** or **part-time** student in any of these settings. They can work to complete a degree or take classes to learn something that interests them.

### If your child is considering education beyond high school, begin with these 3 steps:

Talk to your child's guidance counselor.

- If you have programs in mind, reach out to their disability services team.
- Schedule a tour or a meeting with any programs you're interested in. Include your child in this process.

### What happens to my child's existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

- It's possible that your child may keep their IEP until age 22, allowing it to stay in place while they attend community college or a college program. This is called concurrent enrollment:  
[mass.edu/strategic/read\\_maicei.asp](http://mass.edu/strategic/read_maicei.asp).
- If the school determines that your child has met graduation requirements, IEP services may end. However, they can still get accommodations in postsecondary education.

Community colleges, four-year colleges and vocational programs must provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities to prevent discrimination. This can include extra time on tests, note-takers, assistive technology or special seating.

**In most cases, you and your child are responsible for setting up these accommodations – not the school.**

### What about high school graduation day?

This is often an important social milestone, and your child should have the chance to participate. Even without a diploma, they should be allowed to attend the ceremony and "walk" with their peers.

*Most of this information comes from "The Journey to Life After High School: A Road Map for Parents of Children with Special Needs."* **Download it here:** [abilitypath.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/life-after-high-school.pdf](http://abilitypath.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/life-after-high-school.pdf)

### What should we ask a school's Disability Services team?

- Eligibility requirements (if your child qualifies)
- Experience supporting students with disabilities
- Available accommodations and services
- Cost of services, if any
- Adaptive equipment (like hearing aids, speech-to-text)
- Campus accessibility
- Disability support or social groups
- Scholarships for students with special needs

### What are some resources to help select a program or school?

- **College Board College Search:** Use the website to filter for "Additional Support Programs" by service type.  
([bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search?navId=www-cs](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search?navId=www-cs))
- **Think College:** Search for schools equipped to support people with intellectual disabilities by type and location.  
([thinkcollege.net](http://thinkcollege.net))
- **Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment:** A Massachusetts program for students who haven't passed MCAS but can benefit from a college environment.  
([mass.edu/strategic/read\\_maicei.asp](http://mass.edu/strategic/read_maicei.asp))
- **National Center for College Students with Disabilities:** Offers a Campus Disability Resource Database and Community College Finder.  
([nccsd.ici.umn.edu/clearinghouse/audience-specific-resources/future-college-students](http://nccsd.ici.umn.edu/clearinghouse/audience-specific-resources/future-college-students))

### Tips

- Connect with current or former students and parents of the program.
- Remember that education involves more than academics. Consider:
  - Social opportunities
  - Emotional well-being
  - Independent or shared living skills
  - Organization and time management
  - Self-advocacy
  - Budgeting and finances

### State agencies that can help:

- Bureau of Transition Planning (MA Chapter 688)
- Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- Department of Public Health (DPH) – Division for Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs
- MassAbility