

Family Education Sheet

Postsecondary Education



Boston Children's Hospital
Autism Spectrum Center

childrenshospital.org/
autismspectrumcenter

Does your child want to continue their education after high school? Education after high school is becoming more available for a wider range of people on the autism spectrum.

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

- 1 4-year college or university
- 2 Community college or associate degree program
- 3 Vocational or technical school

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 simply to learn something that interests them.

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

Your child will no longer have an IEP after high school. Instead, they may be covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

However, some programs offer concurrent enrollment in a community college for high school students ages 18-22. The IEP remains in place for these students. Read more about concurrent enrollment: mass.edu/strategic/read_maicei.asp.

What does this mean for my child?

This means the school must provide appropriate accommodations to be sure they are not discriminating on the basis of your child's disability. That may include extra time for tests or assignments, providing note-takers, assistive technology or a special seating. Your child is responsible for seeking these accommodations—not the school.

How does my child find these accommodations?

Most schools have a **disability services office** that is responsible for making sure the school is following the ADA guidelines. Your child will have to advocate for themselves in order to get the support they need at college. It is a good idea to set up an appointment with their school's disability services office *before* beginning classes—or even *before* choosing a school.

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

- Eligibility requirements (if your child qualifies)
- Experience supporting students with disabilities
- Number of students supported by the office
- Specific accommodations and services available
- Cost of services, if any

- Options if services are not provided appropriately
- Adaptive equipment (hearing systems, speech-to-text systems)
- Relationship with other agencies, like vocational rehabilitation
- Accessibility of campus
- Disability support or social groups on campus
- Scholarships for students with special needs
- The most difficult majors/classes for students with special needs and available support

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

- The College Board website's College Search (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search?navId=www-cs>): You can select "Additional Support Programs" and search by service type.
- Think College (<https://thinkcollege.net/>) offers a search option for the type of school and location you are looking for.
- Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (http://www.mass.edu/strategic/read_maicei.asp) is a Massachusetts state program that may be a good option if your child has not "passed" MCAS, but would benefit from a college setting.

Tips

- Visit all schools you are considering in person.
- Schedule an appointment with Disability Services before visiting.
- Ask the person in Disability Services for a business card so you have their contact information.
- Connect with students or parents who currently attend the program or went to the program in the past.
- Remember that school is not just about academics. Consider:
 - Social opportunities
 - Independent or shared living skills
 - Self-advocacy
 - Your child's emotional well-being
 - Organization and time management
 - Budgeting and finances

State agencies that can help:

- Mass Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)
- Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Much of the information in this education sheet was found in The Journey to Life After High School: A Road Map for Parents of Children with Special Needs. Download here: <https://abilitypath.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/life-after-high-school.pdf>