

# College Planning Timeline

Getting ready for college takes a lot of planning.

Use this timeline during grades 9 to 12 to get started on the process.



## EVERY YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL

### BUILD YOUR COLLEGE READINESS SKILLS.

Take general education classes to make your academic skills stronger. These classes can also help you to explore your career interests. Understand your disability and your learning style so you can share this information with your college advisor and disability services specialist. Practice using accommodations in high school, so you'll be ready in college.

### DEVELOP A PERSON-CENTERED PLAN.

Ask family, friends, and other people to help you figure out your goals for after high school.

### EXPLORE AND COMMIT TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

High school is a great time to try different extracurricular activities, like clubs, to see which ones are most interesting to you. This is also a great chance to make new friends.

### FIND SUMMER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES/JOB/INTERNSHIPS.

Summer is a wonderful time to earn extra money and explore different career fields. Check with your transition specialist for information about Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and work opportunities in your area.

### MEET REGULARLY WITH YOUR IEP TEAM AND GUIDANCE COUNSELOR.

Make sure your goals and disability needs are included in your Individualized Education Program, or IEP, and your Transition Planning Form. It's important to speak up about your desire to go to college so your team has time to help you prepare.

## JUNIOR YEAR

### LEARN MORE ABOUT COLLEGE.

Start by talking with your family, IEP team, guidance counselor, and classmates. Research colleges online, and make a list of schools that match your career and personal goals. Use Think College's College Search to find options.

### MAKE VISITS TO COLLEGE CAMPUSES NEAR YOU.

Go to open houses, take campus tours, and meet with disability services staff. These staff people can tell you about accommodations, and how they're different in college from what you've had in high school.

## SENIOR YEAR (FALL)

### PUT TOGETHER ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS.

Make sure you and your guidance counselor have all the materials you need for college admission. If you don't know what these materials are, ask your guidance counselor. If they've never heard of this, share this timeline with them.

### HAVE UPDATED EVALUATIONS BEFORE STARTING COLLEGE.

Be strategic about when your last 3-year evaluation will occur, prior to college. One way to be strategic is to plan for this evaluation with your IEP team. You may need to complete some evaluations, or tests, to make sure you have the most current information for disability services staff. These evaluations will help them make sure you get the accommodations you need.

## SENIOR YEAR (SPRING)

### SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION.

Most colleges have due dates between January 1 and March 1 of each year. Check the websites of the colleges you're interested in to see what their exact deadline is.

### SET UP AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR COLLEGE ADVISOR.

Share a current copy of your person-centered plan. It will help your college advisor get to know your interests, preferences, strengths, and needs.

### SET UP AN INTAKE MEETING WITH YOUR COLLEGE'S DISABILITY SERVICES.

Work with your IEP team to get a current copy of your documentation of disability to share at your meeting. This will help you get the accommodations you need.

### REGISTER FOR CLASSES.

Most colleges offer registration to new students beginning in April. Set up a meeting with your college advisor to get the classes you want at the times you need.

### LEARN HOW TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

Contact your local transit authority to enroll in a travel training program. Your transition specialist can help you set this up.

### ATTEND NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION.

Most colleges offer orientation for their new students between June and August. Don't miss this chance to get to know your new school and classmates!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

TY HANSON

Think College Transition Project  
Institute for Community Inclusion  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
ty.hanson@umb.edu



[www.thinkcollege.net/tct](http://www.thinkcollege.net/tct)

The Think College Transition Project is funded by an Investing in Innovation Development Grant # U411C130149 from the Office of Innovation and Improvement with matching funds provided by the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation. Think College is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston.