



# Learn & Grow Together: Post Secondary Education & Training

*Education is a lifelong learning adventure!*

What is post-secondary education? Post-secondary education, also called higher or tertiary (non-degree) education, is an optional level of schooling beyond what is required by law in most places. University learning is one of the most common examples. Other examples include (but are not limited to) community colleges, vocational schools, and trade programs.

Receiving a post-secondary education and experiencing that very exciting time in life is as beneficial for students with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (IDD) as for students without. The growth that students experience in college or other postsecondary opportunities can be measured in a number of areas, including academic, personal skill-building, employment, independence, self-advocacy, and self-confidence. For students with intellectual disabilities, this growth is also reflected in increased self-esteem.

Being part of campus life, taking classes (whether auditing or for credit), and learning to navigate a world of high expectations develops the skills needed for successful adult life. When we keep college in the mix of possibilities as students with intellectual disabilities explore which steps to take after high school, it makes the statement that we believe in their potential for success.

To find the post-secondary education program that best fits your needs will require research. Conducting our own research, here is what we found.

- The best resources on a college campus are typically found through the Continuing Education office.
- A student, unable to meet entrance requirements may be able to “audit” a course.
- Students are expected to advocate for themselves and are protected under FERPA. The Think College *Insight Brief* #31 explains what FERPA is and how it can affect the relationship with your child’s college staff and faculty.
- The *Parental Affidavit for Academic Information form* is a sample form that a parent can sign to document that they claim their son/daughter as a dependent on their federal tax return, thereby providing them with view elements of their child's educational record.

## VIDEOS, RESOURCES & POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS

### VIDEO

*Rethinking College* is a 25-minute [film](#) produced by Think College that explores the growing movement to include students with intellectual disability in higher education. Through the perspectives of parents, educators, advocates, policy leaders, and (most importantly) students, this film illustrates how colleges and universities can provide a setting for all students to grow, learn, and build toward better futures.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES	RESOURCE SUMMARY
<a href="#">Access College: The Student Lounge</a> University of Washington	The Student Lounge has information about resources and events designed to help you learn more about how to prepare for and be successful in postsecondary education and challenging career opportunities.
Association on High Education And Disability - <a href="#">AHEAD</a>	AHEAD is a professional membership organization for individuals involved in the development of policy and in the provision of quality services to meet the needs of persons with disabilities involved in all areas of higher education.
<a href="#">Going to College</a> Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention	The Going to College web site contains information about living college life with a disability. It's designed for high school students and provides video clips, activities and additional resources that can help you get a head start in planning for college.
<a href="#">HEATH Resource Center</a> at the National Youth Transitions Center George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development.	The HEATH Resource Center is a web-based clearinghouse that serves as an information exchange of educational resources, support services and opportunities.
<a href="#">Spectrum U</a>	Spectrum U compiles information on college and university programs and services for students who are on the autism spectrum.
<a href="#">Think College!</a> Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston	Think College is an online database of post-secondary information, resources and college options for individuals who have an intellectual disability.



## FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** ([FASFA](#)) program provides student aid each year to help pay for college or career school.

The **Scholarships and Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities** [page](#) of the Affordable Colleges website provides a list of general scholarships for students with disabilities, as well as those specifically aimed towards students with learning disabilities, students with hearing or visual impairments, students with psychological disabilities, students with mobility impairments, and more.

The **Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)** Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program serves adults with disabilities when the disability is a substantial barrier to employment and VR services are required to achieve employment. Available services include vocational evaluations, counseling and guidance, training and education assistance, assistive technology and more.

The VR program serves youth and students with disabilities when pre-employment transition services are required to prepare for and obtain post-secondary education and employment opportunities. Services include job exploration and counseling, work-based learning experiences and training.

For additional information, check out the [TWC Vocational Rehab Services Manual](#).



## POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS

POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
Association For Independent Living ( <a href="#">AFIL</a> ) 2826 Storey Lane   Dallas, TX 75220 214-351-0798	The AFIL Program is a twenty-four hour educational and residential program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Austin Community College: <a href="#">STEPS</a> (Skills, Training and Education for Personal Success) 5930 Middle Fiskville Road   Austin, TX 78752 512-289-9065	ACC's STEPS provides up to a two year program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities interested in gaining skills to enter the workforce or continue to develop their education.
College Living Experience ( <a href="#">CLE</a> ) – Austin 11801 Stonehollow Drive, Suite 100 Austin, TX 78758 800-486-5058	CLE provides post-secondary supports to students with autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, ADHD, and other varying exceptionalities. Individualized services are provided in the areas of academics, independent living, social skills, and career development.
Eastern New Mexico State University ( <a href="#">ENMU</a> ) Roswell - Special Services Occupational Training Program P.O. Box 6000   Roswell, NM 88202-6000 800-243-6687 or 575-624-7286	ENMU-Roswell provides specialized certificate programs for qualified students with disabilities in CNA/Home Health, Food Service, Office Skills, Child Care Attendant, Auto Mechanics, Maintenance /Grounds-keeping, Welding, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Tech, Veterinary Assistant, Stocking and Merchandising and Laboratory Animal Caretaker.

<p>El Centro College – <a href="#">Moving On Program</a>  Dallas  214-860-5940</p>	<p>Classes are specifically designed for students with certain types of learning disabilities. Courses are intended to prepare students for work by teaching interpersonal skills, basic work-related academic and computer skills, and work readiness skills, such as how to get and keep a job.</p>
<p>El Centro College – <a href="#">Next Step Program</a>  Dallas  214-860-5940</p>	<p>The Next Step program introduces students to employer expectations, and instruction on how to retain employment. Basic office-computer tasks, basic reading, writing, and math skills are also taught.</p>
<p>Green Oaks Adult Learning (<a href="#">GOAL</a>) Program  500 Houston Street   Arlington, TX 76011  817-861-5000  <a href="mailto:info@greenoaksschool.org">info@greenoaksschool.org</a></p>	<p>The GOAL program is designed for adults who have completed their secondary education plan. The program provides continuing emphasis on academics, social skills, vocational training and additional life skills.</p>
<p>Helping Everyone Reach Outstanding Educational Success (<a href="#">H.E.R.O.E.S.</a>) Continuing Education Courses  101 S. Coit Rd., Suite 36-348   Richardson, TX 75080  469-225-9462  <a href="mailto:info@heroesdfw.org">info@heroesdfw.org</a></p>	<p>H.E.R.O.E.S. Continuing Education courses provide lifelong learning in the areas of, but not limited to: Job Development &amp; Training, Basic Knowledge of Computer Skills, Healthy Living and Daily Living Skills, Healthy Adult Relationships &amp; Money Management.</p>
<p><a href="#">Life Point, Inc.</a>  580 Pleasant Ridge Dr.   Mansfield, TX 76063  817-473-7125</p>	<p>LifePoint School provides young adults, ages 18-29 with disabilities, training in the areas of life skills for daily living, educational and pre-vocational instruction and socialization.</p>
<p><a href="#">My Possibilities</a>  1631 Dorchester Drive   Plano, TX 75075  469-241-9100  <a href="mailto:frontdesk@mptx.org">frontdesk@mptx.org</a></p>	<p>My Possibilities is a full-day, continued education program for adults with disabilities in North Texas.</p>
<p><a href="#">nonPareil.Institute</a>  5240 Tennyson Parkway, Ste. 105   Plano, TX 75024  972-900-9476  <a href="mailto:Gary@npitx.org">Gary@npitx.org</a></p>	<p>The nonPareil Institute provides technical training and employment to individuals who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).</p>

Tarrant Area Food Bank Community Kitchen: [Culinary Job Training Program](#)

2600 Cullen Street | Fort Worth, TX 76107  
817-332-9177

The Tarrant Area Food Bank Community Kitchen provides free culinary job training to adults from all backgrounds. Professional chefs on the Food Bank's staff teach a 14-week course in food preparation and service. Each student then serves a two-week, unpaid internship in a food service setting.

## PLANNING FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The following are recommendations from [Think College](#) to make college a reality.

- **Start planning early.** Use IEP meetings as early as 8th grade to set goals for high school and beyond. Decisions on courses taken in high school may determine eligibility for postsecondary options. Students should take an active role in goal setting. Transfer responsibility gradually from parent to student through the high school years to foster the independence needed to attend college.
- **Weigh the benefits of attending college.** All students, with and without disability, benefit from college in the areas of academics, personal skills, independence, self-advocacy, and new friendships. Students with IDD, especially, increase their self-confidence as they see themselves doing the same things their peers experience. All aspects of college life can contribute to the development of skills needed for successful adulthood, especially employment.
- **Consider what accommodations and supports are needed.** Students are not entitled to the same services in college as they are in high school. Students must demonstrate eligibility for accommodations by documenting a disability.
- **Consider program options.** There are three types of programs found at different colleges. The first type focuses on disability issues along with exposure to regular classes with appropriate supports. The second type is completely inclusive, where students with IDD are mainstreamed with regular classes. The third type has segregated classes designed specifically for students with similar disabilities. Students may also choose to audit classes, take individual classes for credit, enter a certificate program, enter a 2-year degree program, or enter a 4-year degree program.
- **Research financial aid options.** Most colleges require filing the Federal Financial Aid Application as a first step. Non-degree-seeking students now qualify for Pell Grants, federal student loans, and work study. Financial aid may also be available through a state VR Program.
- **Contact colleges early.** The application process is time consuming and complex. It may be wise to contact the Office of Disability Services before the Admissions Office. Visit the campus, sit in on a class, and talk informally to current students. If possible, students should take a college class while still in high school as part of the exploratory process.