



A Timetable for Transition Planning for Students with LD or ADHD

Grade 8: Preparing for High School Success

Students with learning disabilities/ADHD need to:

- Take the most academically challenging program in the most integrated setting possible.
- Consult LD teachers as needed on how to become independent learners.
- Actively participate in IEP meetings and suggest goals that focus on study skills, time management, and test-taking strategies.
- Seek opportunities that will foster self-determination and independence through increased responsibility at home and in school.
- Develop money management skills and assist in meal preparation, shopping duties, and caring for clothing.
- Expand academic interests through electives and extracurricular activities.
- Begin to identify preferences and interests.
- Keep a calendar for activities and homework assignments.
- Develop appropriate social skills and interpersonal communication skills.
- Learn about high school expectations and offerings.

Grades 9 & 10: Transition Planning Begins

Students with learning disabilities/ADHD need to:

- Continue to practice Grade 8 goals.
- Learn what learning disabilities are and are not.
- Develop an understanding of the nature of their own disability and learning style.
- Clarify the exact nature of their learning disability or ADHD by reviewing the diagnostic report with an LD specialist or psychologist.
- Learn about civil rights and the responsibilities of high schools and colleges under the IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA.
- Self-advocate with parents, teachers, and peers.
- With parent input select classes (e.g., word processing, public speaking, study skills) that will prepare them academically for college or vocational/technical school.
- Avoid temptation to “retreat” to lower-track classes, if college-bound. Select solid college prep courses.
- Be wary of course waivers and carefully consider implications of those choices.
- Use LD support and accommodations in math or foreign-language classes rather than seeking a waiver, if possible.
- Seek classroom teachers and learning environments that are supportive.
- Enroll in remediation classes if necessary.

Grades 9 & 10: Transition Planning Begins (Continued)

- Focus on “strategy-based” learning with LD teacher.
- Balance class schedules by not taking too many difficult courses in the same semester, or too many classes that play into the area of weakness.
- Beware of peer advice on which classes to take and avoid.
- Provide input on who should participate in the planning team.
- Become a co-leader of the transition planning team at the IEP meeting.
- Demonstrate independence by writing some of their own IEP goals.
- Try out accommodations and auxiliary aids in high school classes that are deemed appropriate by LD teachers (e.g., taped textbooks from RFB&D, note takers, laptop computers, extra time on exams).
- Know how, when, and where to discuss and request needed accommodations.
- Learn about technological aids such as talking calculators, four-track tape recorders, optical scanners, handheld spell checkers, voice-activated software, and electronic day planners.
- Know how to access information from a large library.
- Meet with a guidance counselor to discuss PSAT registration for October administration (in the 10th grade).
- Arrange with guidance counselor to take PSAT/ PLAN with accommodations if warranted.
- Register for SAT II if appropriate.
- Use “score choice” option for SAT II test, to release only those scores desired.
- Gain a realistic assessment of potential for college and vocational school.
- Consider working at a part-time summer job or volunteer position.

Grade 11: Transition Planning in the Junior Year

Students with learning disabilities/ADHD need to:

- Continue to practice Grade 8, 9, & 10 goals.
- Review IEP and ITP for any changes or modifications for the upcoming year.
- Advocate for a complete psycho-educational evaluation to be conducted by the beginning of 12th grade as an IEP goal.
- Present a positive self-image by stressing their strengths, while understanding the influence of their learning disability.
- Keep grades up. Admissions staff look for upward grade trends.
- Arrange for PSATs with accommodations in mid-October. Apply for a social security number if necessary.
- Match vocational interests and academic abilities with appropriate postsecondary or vocational options.
- Explore advantages and disadvantages of community colleges, vocational technical schools, and 4-year colleges given the learning disability and/or ADHD.
- Meet with local Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) counselor to determine their eligibility for services. If eligible, ask counselor for assistance in vocational assessment, job placement, and/or postsecondary education or training.

Grade 11: Transition Planning in the Junior Year (Continued)

- Consult several of the popular LD college guides and meet with a college advisor to discuss realistic choices.
- Finalize arrangements for the SATs or ACTs with necessary accommodations.
Visit Web site for ACT (<http://www.act.org>) and College Board (<http://www.collegeboard.org>).
- Start with a list of 15–20 colleges based on the LD guides, visit the Web site for these institutions, and request specific information about LD services offered.
- When reviewing a prospective college Web site, determine how available support services are on campus. Is there specific information on the site about disabilities?
- Preview colleges with <http://www.collegebound.net> or <http://usnews.com> search site.
- Narrow listing to 8–10 preliminary choices based on competitiveness, location, curriculum, costs, level of LD support, etc.
- Request any additional information needed from college (e.g., applications to LD program, specific fee information, financial aid forms, etc.).
- Discuss with parents, counselor, regular education teachers, and LD teachers the anticipated level of LD support needed in a postsecondary setting.
- Understand the differences between an “LD program” and support services models.
- Attend “LD college nights” at local area high schools. Assume responsibility for asking questions of college representatives.
- Develop a “Personal Transition File” with parent and teacher assistance. Contents should include: current diagnostic testing, IEPs, grades, letters of recommendation, and student activity chart or resume.
- Narrow options to 5 or 6 schools ranging in competitiveness and levels of LD support.
- Prepare a “College Interview Preparation Form” to use during the campus interviews.
- Arrange for campus visit and interviews in advance. Don’t just drop in on the LD support services office staff and expect an interview.
- Consider sitting in on a class or arrange to meet college students with learning disabilities through the support services office. Listen to their firsthand experiences.
- Meet with the designated LD services coordinator to determine the level of support offered and to assess the nature of the services offered (e.g., remedial, compensatory, learning strategies, etc.).
- Determine how important self-advocacy is on campus. Determine how accommodations are arranged with faculty.
- Follow up with a personal thank-you note to the disability coordinator.
- Consider a private LD preparatory school or a “13th year” program if postsecondary education doesn’t seem to be a viable option.
- Consider enrolling in a summer orientation program specifically for students with learning disabilities/ADHD. Contact HEATH Resource Center (800-54-HEATH) for more information.
- Apply for a summer job, volunteer position, or career-related work experience.

Grade 12: Transition Planning in the Senior Year

Students with learning disabilities/ADHD need to:

- Continue to practice Grades 8, 9, 10, & 11 goals.
- Update IEP and ITP quarterly.
- Retake the SATs or ACTs to improve scores. Note that scores may be flagged as “special” or “nonstandard.” Discuss implications with guidance counselor.
- Select several colleges as “safe bets” for admission, several “reasonable reaches” and one or two “long shots.”
- Consider early decision only if convinced that a particular school is the best match.
- Note all application deadlines. Complete a paper-based application to use as a model for online versions.
- Consider downloading applications or using the Common Application.
- Be alert to early application deadlines for some LD college programs.
- View a variety of college shopping networks: Collegenet (<http://www.collegenet.com>); Collegelink (<http://www.collegelink.com>); AppZap (<http://www.collegeview.com/appzap>).
- Carefully select people to write letters of recommendation. Give teachers and counselors plenty of time. Pick a teacher who knows their personality. Recognize that such letters may include comments about the learning disability. Keep Personal Transition File.
- Keep a listing of names, phone numbers, and addresses of postsecondary contact people and copies of all applications in their Personal Transition File.
- Role-play the college interview with guidance counselors or special education teachers.
- Decide whether to disclose their learning disability/ADHD prior to admission.
- View “Transitions to Postsecondary Learning” video and complete student handbook exercises with LD teachers (Eaton/Coull Learning Group, 800-933-4063).
- Pick up all necessary financial aid forms (FAF) for college from guidance counselor. Males who are 18 years old must register for the draft to be eligible for federal aid forms.
- Discuss financial considerations with guidance counselors and search the Web using <http://www.finaid.org> or <http://fastweb.com>.
- Tap into Department of Rehabilitation Services. If eligible for job guidance, consider enrolling in internships or job-shadowing experiences that permit “hands-on” skill building.
- Formulate a realistic career plan.
- Forward mid-year grades to colleges.
- Wait for the news from colleges. If the news is good, then:
 - Rank postsecondary choices based upon their ability to successfully compete and the provision of support services to meet their unique learning needs.
 - Notify all schools of their decision.
 - Pay housing deposit by May 1, if appropriate.
 - Arrange to have final transcript sent to the college.
 - Hold an exit interview with guidance counselor and LD teachers.

Grade 12: Transition Planning in the Senior Year (Continued)

- If the news is not good, then:
 - Appeal the admissions decision, especially if some new “LD-relevant data” were not considered or overlooked.
 - Pursue any of a variety of alternatives such as applying to a less competitive college with a “rolling admissions” policy; enrolling in a postgraduate year at an LD preparatory school; enrolling in a community college with academic support services.
 - Consider taking a college course for credit over the summer at a community college or in conjunction with a summer orientation program.

For more information on this topic, see our related article: “High School Students with LD or AD/HD: Considering College”: <http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=975>

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