

Getting Ready For College - A Post Secondary Option for Students With I/DD

The Arc of New Jersey
Family Institute
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A college experience broadens a person's life!
Some of the most enriching opportunities include:

- Opportunity to develop a love of life-long learning
- Opportunity to develop critical life and soft skills for community living and employment, such as organization and time-management
- Opportunity to navigate a new environment
- Opportunity to meet new people and develop new relationships
- Opportunity to take risks in a safe environment; opportunity to learn how to deal with things when they don't work out in the expected way
- Opportunity to develop and practice self-advocacy and self-determination skills
- Opportunity to make choices- schedules, classes, free time
- Opportunity to ask for help when it is needed and solve problems
- Opportunity to be autonomous- to be the driver instead of the passenger!

Why Go to College?

What Impact Can College have on a Person's Life?

- Have high expectations and begin to plan for college early
- Encourage academic courses
- Start financial planning early
- Help the student and school personnel see college as an option
- Visit colleges and look at college catalogs with the student
- Understand your student's disability, the impact of the disability and the supports needed, then make sure your child knows this information and is comfortable communicating this with others
- Create and foster opportunities for your student to develop self-advocacy and self-determination skills
- As parents, prepare to change role from one of primary advocate to one of support and guidance

How Can Students and Families Prepare for College?

Even though high school and college have a primary goal of providing education, there are many differences!

- The structure of the day is different
- The expectations and opportunities for student decision-making are different
- The opportunities for independence are different
- The ways of teaching and learning are different
- The systems of testing and grading are different

What are the Key Differences Between High School and College?

College provides the opportunity to develop and refine self-advocacy and self-determination skills.

- Self-advocacy- students learn to describe strengths, describe their disability in functional terms and describe support needs.
- Self-determination-students learn how to and practice making decisions in nearly every college experience.

What Roles do Self-Advocacy and Self-determination Play in the College Experience?

www.thinkcollege.net
www.transitioncoalition.org
www.heath.gwu.edu
www.ahead.org
www.inclusioninstitutes.org


Web Resources



The DREAM Program

Developing Real Expectations for Achieving Mastery
Mercer County Community College





Making the Dream of College Real

for People with Intellectual Disabilities

An individualized, inclusive postsecondary
and transition experience for young adults
with Down syndrome and other
intellectual disabilities

The DREAM Program

The program addresses the development of academic skills, career exploration, social relationships, and independent living skills to enhance success in community and family life.


The DREAM Program



Academics

Academic growth is supported through enrollment in academic skills classes in reading, writing and math as well as interest based electives for credit or audit.

Academics



Electives

Each student's schedule is individually designed according to his or her individual needs and aspirations.

Student Centered Planning



Career Exploration

Career exploration is supported through job shadowing and internships both on and off the college campus.

Career Exploration



Community

Social relationships are supported through full participation in college life including clubs and organizations, special events, theatrical productions and other recreational activities.

Community



Peer Mentors

- Peer mentors are an integral part of the DREAM program
- Mentors provide ongoing support to students:
 - escorts during the first weeks of class
 - in class support
 - social activities
 - listening ears
 - voices of experience

Peer Mentors

The DREAM Program is in accord with the mission of Mercer County Community College

- To maintain an open admissions policy
- To encourage innovation in programs, services and methods of instruction
- To support the personal and intellectual growth of all students
- To encourage a climate of diversity
- To offer a diversified program of student services

Mission

The cost to participants of the DREAM Program is calculated on a per credit basis, following the Mercer County Community College fee schedule. There is an additional program fee for supplemental services.

Cost

**Dreams come true:
without that possibility,
nature would not incite us to
have them.**

John Updike

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Contact Information
