

# Postsecondary Education for Individuals With Intellectual Disabilities

## TIPS AND RESOURCES



### Why a Postsecondary Education?

A postsecondary education can open a whole new world for people both with and without disabilities. The college experience allows one to broaden one's interests, establish and pursue one's goals, and form life-long friendships. In addition to a college education allowing for the possibility of a higher paying job, the social relationships and experiences had in a college setting can lead to greater independence and a clearer understanding of one's place in the world. For a student with an intellectual disability, transitioning from high school to college can be successful with careful IEP transitional planning, thoughtful preparation, and the selection of the right college.

### Postsecondary Transition Planning and IEP Goals

In Tennessee, when a student reaches the age of 14, IEP teams open a discussion on goals and planning for the transition from secondary education to life after high school. If a student is considering going to college, it is important that he/she and the parent(s) know what a high school can provide in terms of preparing and guiding a student toward reaching that goal. The student should be involved in transition planning.

### The following are some considerations that might be discussed with an IEP team.

Is the student enrolled in college preparatory classes?

Are general education requirements being met?

Is it possible for curriculum modifications to be gradually minimized as the student progresses through high school?

How will the student learn study skills, time management, and organizational techniques that will prepare him/her for the college setting?

How will the student learn social skills and maintain a positive self-esteem?

The student will need to prepare for and take college entrance examinations. Ask for accommodations when necessary.

How will the student learn self-advocacy skills?

He/she will need to learn how to articulate his/her disability, learning style, strengths, and weaknesses.

What opportunities exist for the student to explore college choices, support services, and financial aid and scholarship considerations?

Postsecondary education goals should have student and parental input.

### Selecting a Postsecondary Education Institution

As a student with an intellectual disability begins to select a postsecondary institution, many considerations should be taken into account. What kind of school and degree program will best aid the student in meeting learning and career goals? Would a 2-year or a 4-year college be more appropriate? Public or private? Take support services into account. These services vary greatly from institution to institution. Tour campuses and visit the educational institution's Office of Disability Services. Know what accommodations are necessary for the student and ask questions regarding the availability of these supports.

*Please see reverse.*



VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER  
FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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## HOW WE CAN HELP

### Who We Are and Who We Serve

The **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center** works with and for people with disabilities and their family members, educators and service providers, researchers, students, and policy makers. Faculty and staff engage in interdisciplinary research, training, service, and information dissemination and work in collaboration with local, state and national networks and partners. (615) 322-8240, toll-free (866) 936-8852, [vkc.vumc.org](http://vkc.vumc.org)

### Next Steps at Vanderbilt

A four-year certification program for students with intellectual disabilities, providing individualized Programs of Study in the areas of education, social skills, and vocational training. The goal of the program is to broaden the career options and opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities in inclusive, age-appropriate settings. See [vu.edu/nextsteps](http://vu.edu/nextsteps)

### Tennessee Inclusive Higher Education Alliance

The mission of the TN IHE Alliance is to increase the inclusive higher education opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disability in our state and beyond. See [tnihealliance.org](http://tnihealliance.org)

### Tennessee Disability Pathfinder

Provides free information, referral sources, and help with navigating services via phone, email, and website. Assistance is available to individuals of all ages, all types of disabilities, and all languages spoken. Its website includes a directory of more than 3,000 agencies searchable by Tennessee county, topic of interest, and other filters. Pathfinder is a project of the VKC and is partially funded by Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities and other state agencies. (615) 322-8529, toll-free (800) 640-4636, [TNPathfinder.org](http://TNPathfinder.org)

### Two Ways to Take Part in Research

StudyFinder is a searchable database that lists current VKC studies. Studies seek people of all ages with and without developmental disabilities. See [vkc.vumc.org/studyfinder](http://vkc.vumc.org/studyfinder). Research Match is a secure place for volunteers and researchers to connect. See [researchmatch.org](http://researchmatch.org)

### Local Resources

- **The Arc of Tennessee**  
[thearctn.org](http://thearctn.org)
- **Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Network**  
[TNDDNetwork.org](http://TNDDNetwork.org)
- **Tennessee Department of Special Education**  
[tn.gov/education/student-support/special-education/special-education-secondary-transition.html](http://tn.gov/education/student-support/special-education/special-education-secondary-transition.html)
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**  
[tn.gov/humanservices/ds/vocational-rehabilitation.html](http://tn.gov/humanservices/ds/vocational-rehabilitation.html)

### Postsecondary Education and Transition Websites

- **Think College**  
[thinkcollege.net](http://thinkcollege.net)
- **Going To College**  
[going-to-college.org](http://going-to-college.org)
- **HEATH Resource Center**  
[heath.gwu.edu](http://heath.gwu.edu)
- **National Center on Secondary Education and Transition**  
[ncset.org](http://ncset.org)
- **Postsecondary Innovative Transition and Technology**  
[postitt.org](http://postitt.org)

### National Resources

- **National Dissemination Center for Children With Disabilities**  
[nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/st1book.htm](http://nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/st1book.htm)
- **Center for Self-Determination**  
[self-determination.com](http://self-determination.com)
- **Office for Civil Rights**  
[ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html](http://ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html)

