

# College Navigator

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# High School

vs

# University

Your time is structured by your parents and teachers

You manage your own time



## **High School**

- **The school identifies students with disabilities.**
- **The school district is responsible for evaluating and documenting the student's learning disability.**
- **The school automatically incorporates accommodations into the student's daily schedule once a disability is documented.**
  - **The school modifies the educational programs.**
    - **Parents are advocates for their children**
  - **Special classes and placement must be available for students.**
- **Parents are notified and must give permission for any decisions regarding their son or daughter.**
  - **An IEP meeting is held to determine placement and appropriate services.**
    - **The school provides assessment of disabilities.**

## College

- **The school protects a student's right to privacy and confidentiality.**
- **The student is responsible for providing current documentation of the disability to the college.**
- **The student must request accommodations each time they are needed.**
- **The college makes reasonable adjustments in instructional programs which do not alter the essential content or requirements of a course or program.**
  - **Students are their own advocates.**
  - **Colleges are not required to provide special classes or programs for students with disabilities.**
- **Parents are not notified of services their son or daughter requests unless the student grants permission for that information to be released.**
- **Students work with college professionals and instructors to determine if and what services are appropriate.**

# College Shopping

- **Will my child live on campus or commute?**
- **How will they get to school everyday?**
- **Are the online courses accessible?**
- **Are the dorms accessible for my child? (physical, sensory, etc.)**
- **What size are the classrooms?**
- **Should my child go to school in the city or a rural setting?**
- **Can the dining hall options meet my child's allergy needs?**

# Disability Office Shopping

- **How many students are served in this office?**
- **Would my child have a designated person to assist them?**
- **Is there some sort of plan created between this office and my child?**
- **Can my child have untimed testing/homework?**
- **Do you have note takers?**
- **What about (un)excused absences?**
- **What is your inclement weather policies?**
- **And everything else under the sun... 😊**

**They're  
in...now what  
do they need  
in order to  
succeed?**

- **Trusting relationship with Disability Supports/Professors**
- **Personal Care Attendant's**
  - **Durable medical equipment**
  - **Private bathroom**
- **Orientation & Mobility Specialist**
- **Mentor/Mentee**
- **Transportation to/from school**
- **Assistive Technology**
  - **Specific software**
  - **Use of tape recorder**

**What are we  
doing at  
Easter Seals?**

**Identifying the problem**

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**Looking at unmet needs**

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**The creation of our College Navigator program**



## **Personal stories from ESMA clients**

- **A young man with ASD indicate that had he had a modicum of the specialized instruction he was receiving in high school, he would have been able to thrive in college on a level playing field. Instead, he participated in a training certificate program where he barely finished due to bullying from his repetitive clarifying questions in class. When asked what would have helped him, he said ‘someone to help redirect his focus on the smaller details and someone to provide specialized academic tutoring versus the standard tutoring’.**

## Personal stories from ESMA clients

- **A young man living with Schizophrenia indicated similar supports as the young man above; however, he helped shape the services offered with specific examples. For instance, he didn't know what a curriculum was; his medication causes him to be drowsy in the mornings so he could have benefitted from classes later in the day, but didn't understand he could do that. He also needed to have each professor fill out a form every single time he had an exam, which meant more for him to worry about with deadlines. Once his anxiety rose from lack of support, his primary disability exacerbated, causing him to focus exclusively on his health, not academics.**

## California Dreamin'

- January, 2018-Our first storied successful student came to us by way of Los Angeles. Adam is a California resident studying cello at Berklee College of Music.



## BNY Mellon Financial & BCIL

- 2018-2019- Easter Seals received a grant from BNY Mellon Financial to support college students with disabilities pursuing a higher education degree in a STEM field in the Boston area.
- 2018-2019- Easter Seals received a grant from the Boston Center for Independent Living to support college students with disabilities who also benefitted from the use of assistive technology in the Boston area.

## DDS Pilot Program

- 2018- DDS and Easter Seals created a partnership pilot program to serve 10 of their clients through the Autism Commission pursuing higher education.
  - We supported the Northeast region of Massachusetts.
  - Of these 10 students, 8 finished the program. The 2 that left the program left due to medical reasons.
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- 2019- Due to the success of the first year pilot program, DDS and Easter Seals increased the capacity in year 2 of the pilot program from 10 to 20 students served. We also now serve both the Northeast and Boston regions.

# Services offered

- **Setting personal schedules (time and organizational management)**
- **In-depth orientation & mobility (ex. Understanding curriculum, selecting classes, etiquette, etc.)**
- **Identify and instruct in use of appropriate assistive technology**
- **Academic redirection and focus**
- **Collaboration with disability services to address disclosure, explanation of accommodations, streamlining processes per semester**
- **Integrate assistive technology into daily routine**
- **Develop an action plan for each semester of college**

# Goals of College Navigator

- **Help identify potential barriers and problem solve around them with college staff**
- **Advocate with the student on identifying their needs and being able to explain them to college staff**
- **Create a supportive environment between the college and student to ensure success**
- **Improve outcomes for students with disabilities completing higher education**

# Desired outcomes

- **Lasting higher educational commitment**
- **Social experiences leading to lifelong relationships**
  - **Matriculation among peers with and without disabilities contributing to the average norm**
  - **Leading to a higher employment potential**