



## Module 4 – Thinking College

***“Being at college, I think that’s the time when you really start searching for things outside yourself.” – Daryl Hall***

### Instructions

Please view the Thinking College video before completing the checklists and worksheets. The video provides a comprehensive overview of the topic. While completing these worksheets, you may need to reference additional resources and reading. We have listed some resources that we have found helpful in the Additional Resources section.

### Topic Summary

In the Thinking College Module, we review a variety of topics relating to college opportunities for individuals with disabilities including how individuals with disabilities may benefit from a college lifestyle, overview of college readiness skills, as well as a summary of types of available college programs.

### Checklists and Actionables

#### Consider College from the point of view of your son or daughter

- If everyone else in your family goes to college, what does it do to your self-esteem if you want to go but can't?
- If you do not think of college as a stepping stone to adult life, you will need to find other ways to be employable, have a place of your own to call home, make social connections and have meaningful relationships in your life, be healthy, have your legal matters managed with help as needed, learn to self-advocate, manage your own finances, and access services for which you may be eligible.
- Oftentimes this can be accomplished through good transition services after you finish your academic program but college opens up worlds to you for discovery of strengths, interests and preferences that you may not know you have!



**Regardless of the route to college, anyone thinking about college needs to have some basic skills including:**

- Study skills that include some independent time management
- Ability to emotionally handle, and follow, daily schedule changes
- Some independent living skills
- Some self-advocacy skills including knowledge of when help is needed and where to get it
- Assistive technology skills for learning and being more independent
- Some social skills
- A vision about his/her future and ability to demonstrate why college is important to him/her

**Who Can Help with Thinking College:**

- Family
- Friends and friends of your family
- Older siblings in your family or of other same-aged peers who are in or have gone to college
- Current students at the college you are considering who have and who don't have disabilities to learn their perspectives about what the college does and doesn't offer by way of courses, supports, extracurricular activities, dormitory life, etc.
- Guidance counselors at school (especially to find colleges that offer more individualized supports, smaller class sizes to increase individual attention, etc.)
- College admissions offices and Disability Services offices
- Individual course instructors
- The National Coordinating Center for Think College
- Think College programs in your state
- FAFSA or other sources of financial aid
- Mentor programs or other sources of academic/social support



### How to Get Started:

- ❑ Have an honest discussion in your family about whether your child wants to go to college. Maybe taking an adult learning class offered in the community where you live will be enough to satisfy your child.
- ❑ Start as soon as possible to work at home on the skills that are helpful to college students and make sure they are addressed in the IEP.
- ❑ Support your child in developing a “can-do” attitude and drive to overcome obstacles.
- ❑ Be prepared to advocate for your child if college is “right” for him/her because some people will be discouraging due to their deficit way of thinking.
- ❑ Start a college fund/apply for financial aid.
- ❑ Try to avoid life-changing events (e.g., divorce, “down-sizing” your home, relocating to another community) while your child is enrolled in college.
- ❑ Access anyone and everyone who can help you and your child determine “the right fit” for a college. Especially explore formal “Think College” options at <https://thinkcollege.net/> if your son or daughter has an intellectual disability.
- ❑ Access “pre-college programs” – i.e., some schools, for example, allow high school seniors to spend a few days on campus or offer an “incoming student summer program” so your child can experience what college is really like. In the past

### Additional Resources

The Think College National Coordinating Center provides support, coordination, training, and evaluation services for Transition and Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

<https://thinkcollege.net/>



# Starting small

List the first 5 things you will do/assure gets done to support your son/daughter is getting prepared for either traditional college, a specialized certificate program, or Think College program.

Action Steps	Who's responsible	Completion date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		