ThinkCollege
TRANSITION PROJECT

GRAB AND GO PRACTICES

USING APPS AND TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE DUAL ENROLLMENT

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INTRODUCTION

College students with intellectual disability or autism are often assumed to need educational coaching support, in addition to more traditional accommodations that disability services and academic support centers offer. At the beginning of a college experience, this educational support may indeed be critical to ensure a successful transition to college. All too often, though, this support becomes more habit than necessity.

For a variety of reasons, student support teams tend to rely on full educational coaching, rather than tap into natural supports that students can be taught to use to increase their independence and self-sufficiency. One important and easy-to-access natural support is the use of apps and technology. These tools can enhance student independence both on campus and elewhere where students are pursuing their goals.

In this Grab and Go Practices, we offer suggestions for instructing students to use apps, software applications, smartphones, and other technology tools in typical college experiences. We discuss how these tools can help with mobility, following schedules, academic support, communication, social connections, and personal management.

It is highly recommended that students begin college with a smartphone and learn to use it as a communication and self-management tool to support their college success.

Inclusive Dual Enrollment Student Support for College Success

The Student Support for College Success Grab and Go series summarizes best practices for coaches and mentors who support dually enrolled students with intellectual disability on college campuses. A checklist for educational coaches is included.

- **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**
- **FOLLOWING SCHEDULES**
- **MOBILITY**
- **COMMUNICATION**
- **SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**
- **PERSONAL MANAGEMENT**

MOBILITY

There are numerous ways that people use apps and software to plan for their transportation. City and regional transportation departments often host a municipal website and companion app that include trip planner options for bus, subway, train, walking, and biking. With these online tools, travelers can plan their travel and predict their arrival time.

Many colleges also have their own digital app that includes shuttle and map features so that students can similarly map out and plan their travel on campus.

FOLLOWING SCHEDULES

Staff who support college students on campus have reported that scheduling apps have been particularly helpful, particularly those that incorporate images and can be customized for specific needs, such as developing visual schedules, first–then boards, social stories, and visual models. Students especially value these apps when they are ready to fade staff support and want to travel as independently as possible on campus.

First Then Visual Schedule and Visual Schedule Planner are two apps we recommend, but there are many other free options.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Students often need support to adjust to the academic expectations of college. Educational coaches can demonstrate for students how apps and software can help them participate as fully as possible in their courses and keep themselves organized.

For starters, educational coaches often report that the typical free apps on a smartphone can be used to record meetings with the instructor, take pictures of the notes on the board, and add classmates and the instructor to a contacts list. Another example is a smartpen that may be used, with the instructor's permission, to record notes from class that can later be uploaded and accessed online.

Educational coaches also encourage students to use word prediction and text-to-speech software to help them complete longer reading assignments.

COMMUNICATION

Once students are enrolled in college courses, it is their responsibility to communicate with instructors directly if they have questions or concerns. Likewise, instructors primarily communicate with students using email and through the announcements feature of the online learning management system they use for the class. Students must build in time to check their university email regularly, and get comfortable using this communication method with instructors and classmates outside of class.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Students have opportunities to connect socially with classmates, peer mentors, and club members outside of the usual times they see each other on campus. Some students may need help developing the technical skills to use text messaging or social media, such as Snapchat and Twitter, to communicate with peers. Other students may need support to initiate communication and make plans.

Some educational coaches use apps such as Pictello to help students develop social stories to initiate these social interactions. Other coaches have used apps such as Proloquo4Text, a text-based communication app, to help students talk to peers.

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

Time and money management are two areas in which technology can help coaches to fade their support. Students have learned to manage their money and college cash cards with a college or checkbook, text their coach from across the campus, set their phone alarm to get to class on time or catch a bus, and use a calendar app to schedule and keep their own appointments. Students have also used an alarm app to manage their own medications while on campus, reducing the need for coach support.

Checking in: Are you supporting dually enrolled students to...

- Use technology to plan their own travel to and from campus?
- Follow a typical college schedule with the assistance of a visual planning app?
- Access software to complete course readings and assignments?
- Communicate with their instructors and classmates via text or email?
- Connect with college peers via social media?
- Get to class and the bus on time using phone alarms?