

An Open Letter to Parents of
Students With Disabilities About to Enter College

Dear Parents,

I have been working in the area of students with disabilities at the college level for more than 30 years, but that is not why I am writing to you today. I am writing as a parent, and thus as someone who shares all your current anxieties. My daughter, who graduated from high school in early June, will be going away to college this Fall. She has Cerebral Palsy, uses a wheelchair, and has limited speech capabilities, so you can be assured that I have been very involved in the educational programming and planning she has received during her years in the public school system. I

typical teens and aren't comfortable sitting through that kind of rehearsal, settle for making them sit and listen while you demonstrate how you would approach certain subjects. For example, think you should tell them about how the teachers arranged for extra time for you on tests when you were in high school. I probably say, "In high school, I was allowed extra time for tests in English because it takes me a long time to put my thoughts in writing, but I never needed it in Math." Our SWD may not acknowledge the strategies you share, but you may be surprised to hear those words come out of his/her mouth at the interview!

DON'T interrupt. If you disagree with something the disability service provider says, or if your SWD says something that you know is incorrect, or if you see your SWD agreeing with/to something when you

long time. Remember, your son/daughter will call, email, or text if they need you. They know what you can do for them, but now it is time for them to go it alone. Take a deep