

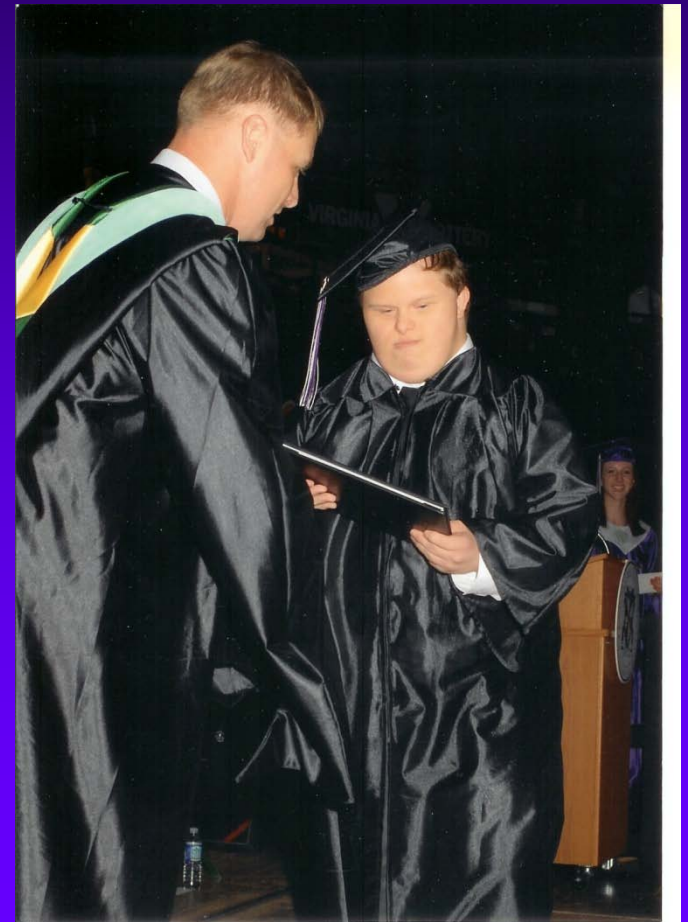
***The Changing Role of the  
Family . . .  
A Parent's Perspective***

**2010 State of the Art Conference on  
Postsecondary Education and  
Individuals with Intellectual  
Disabilities**

# I want to go to College!

## *The Journey Begins*

- Began with a dream to go to college just like his siblings.
- Resulted from success of inclusive educational opportunities.
- Supported by family's desire for improved employment and independent living options.



# High School – The Transition Years

IDEA 2004 provides rights and protections:

- A free and appropriate public school education for each child
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) developed by a team, including the child's parent(s).
- Beginning no later than age 16, a statement of needed transition services, included in IEP.
- Goal is to assure successful Postsecondary outcomes
- Parents have access to student records and other information about their child.
- Parents play an active role in all decision making.

# How Can I be Involved in my Child's Transition?

- Advocate for your child
- Share responsibility to prepare child for adult life
- Be involved in Transition planning
- Ensure child directly participates in the IEP process.
- Insist on measurable postsecondary outcomes
- Help your child develop realistic goals
- Show confidence in your child's ability to be successful
- Encourage your child to develop good self-determination and self-advocacy skills

# Self-Determination and Self Advocacy Skills

- Decision making
- Choice making
- Problem solving
- Goal Setting
- Risk taking
- Safety skills
- Self awareness

# The College Experience

Provides student the opportunity to:

- Participate in campus wide recreational & social activities
- Improve academic skills
- Develop employment skills
- Become independent
- Improve self-advocacy skills
- Learn to use public transportation
- Develop critical life skills
  - Cooking
  - Financial planning & budgeting
  - Management of personal hygiene
  - Health management



# No IEPs in College!

## What Does This Mean to Me?

- Role as “educational director” is over.
- IDEA mandated supports & services replaced by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act & ADA – Civil Rights laws for the purpose of equal access and preventing discrimination.
- Need student’s permission to participate in planning
- Student must be present to discuss issues (housing, financial, academic, etc.)
- Student as self-advocate; parent as mentor

# The Real Challenge!



- “Letting go” - allowing student to take risks and make own decisions.
- Permitting student to sometimes fail in order to learn from his/her mistakes
- Resisting the urge to step in and “fix things”
- It’s easier to do things for them than to teach them to do it themselves
- But I can’t just “go away”



# Parent Concerns With The College Experience and Living On Campus

- **Safety** – Is my child an easy victim? What about the influence of other students?
- **Judgment** – What if he makes a bad decision? Natural consequences can sometimes be serious.
- **Health** – What if he gets sick? Does he know what to do?
- **Weather** – Will he know how to dress? Warm, cold, rain
- **Time management** – Will he be on time? No bell schedule in college.
- **Assistance** – Will he seek help, when needed?
- **Food** – Will he eat right, eat enough, or eat too much?

# How Can I Be Involved Now?

- Encourage
- Guide
- Mentor (Advise)
- Continue to show confidence in your student's ability to be successful



# Expectations for Life After College



- Meaningful Employment
- Earn higher wages
- Require fewer supports
- Own a home, or rent Apartment with a friend
- Expanded social networks including friends without disabilities
- Involvement in community living
- Increased self-esteem
- An independent, bright future with ongoing possibilities!