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Life After High School

Christina Cacioppo Bertsch
Susan Yellin
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The uncertainty of life after high school—navigating the challenges of college admission and/or independent living—can be daunting for every young person and his or her parents. For individuals with disabilities, however, these challenges can seem insurmountable. There is hope however, and *Life After High School* provides guidance to assist disabled young people in their efforts to pursue education, independence, and competency in life skills.

Intended primarily for college-bound teens, *Life After High School* covers a variety of topics that the entire family needs to consider. Author Susan Yellin is a lawyer and a parent who created the Center for Learning Differences in New York and directs the Advocacy and Transition Services at the Yellin Center for Student Success. Christina Cacioppo Bertsch has worked both as director of Disability Services at Fordham University and as a college counselor for disabled students. The authors have combined their expertise to provide a thorough explanation of the basics of disability law and what both parents and children need to know in order to utilize these laws effectively. It is crucial for young people to be involved from an early age in their own care so that when they transition to independence they can articulate their needs, manage their own medical care, and become strong advocates for themselves. The authors state, “If you take only one step to move ahead to prepare for life after high school, it would be to begin as a family to transfer management of your student’s disability from parent to child.”

This book is a useful resource for helping disabled students and their families plan for continuing education after high school. It addresses the specific needs of physical, mental, and learning disabilities, covering how to work with guidance counselors, how and when to take standardized tests, and the specific attributes that a college or university needs to have to help the disabled learner succeed. Throughout the book, the authors have included examples of students with specific difficulties and how they overcame barriers. Each of these examples is examined to see what the student did right, and what could have led to an even better outcome. At the end of the book there is an extensive list of resources for further learning and assistance.

Perhaps most valuable is the book’s overall approach: it addresses the whole person, and not just the disability. The chapters discussing competency are particularly helpful; they discuss not only how to get special accommodations in class, but address issues like money management, personal hygiene, and sex. Every parent hopes that his or her child will grow up to have a full and fulfilling life. The information and advice presented in *Life After High School* will be a key resource in making this happen for the disabled child.
CATHERINE THURESON (September 4, 2010)

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