































COLLEGE READINESS FOR NEURODIVERGENT STUDENTS

Top 10 most important college readiness skill areas from the 2024 survey of over 50 leaders of U.S. college autism and neurodiversity support programs.

SKILL AREA	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	EXPERTS
1 MOTIVATION TO ATTEND COLLEGE <i>"Motivation is almost everything. If they do not want to be in school, the rest is pretty pointless."</i>	Does your student say they want to go college? Does your student have any chronic attendance or disciplinary issues at school? Does your student engage in the college research and application process?	  
2 DESIRE TO SEEK & ACCEPT HELP <i>"The majority of my students who did not persist to their second year were primarily due to lack of help-seeking behavior."</i>	Does your student communicate when they are struggling (school, socially, emotions)? Does your student work well and appreciate the help of tutors and coaches? If applicable, would your student welcome the help from an autism support program?	  
3 SELF-REGULATION <i>"The student needs to be able to do enough of the things to stay in a decently-well-regulated state."</i>	Can your student identify when they are approaching a state of dysregulation? Does your student remove themselves from stressor when approaching dysregulation? Has your student established self-soothing techniques for managing dysregulation?	  
4 INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS <i>"Being able to wake up independently and make it to class is such an important skill!"</i>	Does your student wake themselves up in the morning? Or, do you wake them up? Does your student take their medications as prescribed without prompting? Does your student appropriately manage their personal hygiene?	  
5 EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING <i>"Most students have to learn to break down larger assignments and manage time with competing activities and interests."</i>	Can your student extract themselves from distractions like TV and gaming? Can your student follow a plan to manage through busy weeks (school, job, etc.)? Can your student follow a study plan to complete homework, exams, and quizzes?	  



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6 MENTAL HEALTH <i>“Mental health is one of the biggest hurdles students can face during college.”</i>	Does your student tell someone when they are experiencing anxiety or depression? Does your student reflect on stress triggers that cause anxiety to try to avoid them? Does your student have self-soothing techniques to manage anxiety?	  
7 ACADEMIC SKILLS <i>“College readiness tip: Emphasize accommodations over modifications in K-12 whenever possible, as higher education institutions do not offer modifications.”</i>	Does your student seek help from teachers and tutors when they are struggling? Does your student’s school significantly modify the curriculum to meet their needs? Does your student generally complete and hand in homework without prompting?	  
8 SELF-ADVOCACY <i>“What helps my students the most is having an understanding of how they communicate and plan to navigate challenging and unexpected situations.”</i>	Can your student ask you or others for help when struggling in school or life? Does your student proactively speak with educators about how they learn best? Does your student admit and learn from mistakes?	  
9 PHYSICAL HEALTH <i>“College is a big adjustment and students’ physical health routines, for example, may look very different in college than they did at home.”</i>	Does your student have a regular, established sleep routine? Does your student understand safety basics like seat belts and awareness in public? Does your student understand and avoid substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, tobacco)?	  
10 SOCIAL CONNECTIONS <i>“We have also determined through our program that if social skills are not addressed and supported, the student’s level of academic success declines.”</i>	Does your student calmly communicate wants and needs to others in the home? Can your student regulate their emotions and talk through issues with others? Will your student be able to live with others who have different routines?	  

College Readiness for Neurodivergent Students: Study Results & Workbook

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