

NEURODIVERGENT POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION TOOLKIT & CHECKLIST

A Practical Guide for High School College and Career Coordinators,
Counselors, and Case Managers

Presented by the International Dyslexia Association Oregon

PART 1: CORE FRAMEWORK FOR COORDINATORS

To successfully guide neurodivergent students (including autistic individuals, those with ADHD, dyslexia, or executive functioning challenges), coordinators should anchor their transition programming around three developmental pillars:

1. **Self-Awareness:** Helping the student identify their specific learning profiles, sensory triggers, and cognitive strengths.
2. **Self-Advocacy:** Shifting the role of "requesting accommodations" from parents and educators directly to the student.
3. **Self-Management:** Explicitly tracking executive functioning (time management, routine, organization) rather than focusing solely on academic grades.

Cross-Functional Pathway Matrix

Transition Pathway	Primary Challenge	Accommodations Method	Key Support Agency
Pathway 1: 4-Year University Bound	Sudden unstructured time and learning to live entirely independently.	Formal registration with the campus Disability Resource Center (DRC).	Campus Housing, Residential Life, and Disability Support Offices.
Pathway 2: Community College Pipeline	Managing decentralized commuter systems and self-regulation without on-campus housing.	Semester-by-semester DRC setup and placement test adjustments.	Local Campus Tutoring Hubs and Academic Advising Centers.
Pathway 3: Direct Workforce / Trade Transitions	Adapting to rigid soft-skill expectations, environmental sensory demands, and professional safety hierarchies.	Functional task adjustments requested through Human Resources under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services and assigned Job Coaches.

PART 2: UNIVERSAL COORDINATOR TRANSITION CHECKLIST

Phase 1: Universal Foundation (All Students - Junior Year / Fall Senior Year)

- **Conduct Neurodiversity-Affirming Assessments:** Use strength-based profiling tools to capture student preferences, sensory boundaries, and professional goals.
- **Review IEP/504 Plan Alignment:** Ensure measurable postsecondary goals match the student's actual career interests.
- **Gather Updated Documentation:** Confirm psychological evaluations or IEP documentation are updated within the 3-year window required by adult institutions.
- **Build an Accommodations Portfolio:** Work with the student to create a "Master List" of accommodations that have historically worked for them.
- **Practice Student-Led IEPs:** Encourage the student to present or co-lead their own meetings to practice self-advocacy skills.

Phase 2: Higher Education Pathway (College/University - Spring Junior Year and Fall Senior Year)

- **Identify Campus Support Tiers:** Help the student filter colleges based on support levels (basic ADA compliance vs. structured fee-based dyslexia/autism/ADHD support programs).
- **Connect with Disability Services:** Schedule explicit meetings with the college's Disability Resource Center during campus visits. Remind families that IEPs do not follow students to college.
- **Assess Executive Functioning Readiness:** Evaluate independent living metrics: Can the student self-wake, manage a medication schedule, budget money, and use digital calendars independently?
- **Map Assistive Technology:** Ensure the student is trained on tools they will need independently, such as note-taking or speech-to-text programs.

Phase 3: Workforce & Career Pathway (Employment/Trades - Fall/Winter Senior Year)

- **Connect with Vocational Rehabilitation:** Formally link the student and family with local state adult services (e.g., Department of Vocational Rehabilitation) at least 6 months prior to graduation.
 - **Secure Work-Based Learning:** Arrange low-stakes, supported work experiences, job shadowing, or informational interviews in the student's field of interest.
 - **Target Neuroinclusive Employers:** Look for local businesses or corporate programs known for neurodiversity hiring initiatives.
 - **Examine Disclosure Pro/Cons:** Roleplay conversations regarding when and how to disclose a disability to an employer to request reasonable accommodations under the ADA.
 - **Build Visual Work-Aids:** Help the student design personalized checklist templates, visual schedules, or task-analysis scripts for workplace routines.
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PART 3: COUNSELOR EXIT INTERVIEW PLAYBOOK

Use these strength-based talking points to guide your exit interview with graduating neurodivergent seniors.

1. Defining Neurodiversity (The "Brain Operating System" Analogy)

- **Talking Point:** Shift the narrative away from a medical "deficit" model toward a functional variation model.
- **Counselor Script:**

"Think of brains like computer operating systems. Some people run on Windows, others run on Mac, and others run on Linux. A Mac isn't 'broken' just because it can't run a Windows file (.exe)—it just needs different software, a different shortcut, or a different environment to work perfectly. Your brain is wired differently, not incorrectly. Our goal today is to make sure you have the right software tools for your system as you leave high school."

2. Normalizing the Transition Shock

- **Talking Point:** Prepare the student for the sudden loss of built-in high school structures.
- **Counselor Script:**

"In high school, a lot of your schedule is built for you. The bells ring, teachers remind you of due dates daily, and classes happen in the same building. In college or at work, that scaffolding disappears. Your neurodivergence might feel more noticeable when you transition because the environment changes. It's not that you're less capable; it just means we need to build your own personal scaffolding using the tools we've practiced."

3. Shifting Identity from "Fixed Diagnosis" to "Functional Guide"

- **Talking Point:** Help the student use their diagnosis as an instructional manual rather than a label.
- **Counselor Script:**

"Instead of saying 'I can't do this project because of my ADHD or dyslexia,' we want to change the phrase to: 'Because my brain is wired with ADHD/dyslexia, I need to use a visual timer, text-to-speech software, and a quiet room to get this project done effectively.' Your diagnosis isn't a wall; it's an instruction manual for how you succeed."

PART 4: INTERACTIVE STUDENT WORKSHEET: MY SELF-ADVOCACY SCRIPT

Directions: Complete this worksheet to clarify your needs and practice communicating them. Keep a copy on your phone or in Google Drive to use when talking to professors, coordinators, or work supervisors.

Step 1: My Learning Profile

- **My Top 3 Strengths:** _____
- **Environmental Barriers (e.g., loud spaces, rapid speech, timed tasks):**

- **Accommodations That Help Me Succeed (Check all that apply):**
 - **Testing:** Extended time, quiet testing room, or assistive reading software.
 - **Environment:** Noise-canceling headphones, specific seating, or frequent brief breaks.
 - **Communication:** Written instructions following verbal directions, visual checklists, or advanced access to presentation slides.

Step 2: Higher Education Scripts (College / Trade School)

Script A: Email to the College Disability Support Services (DSS)

Subject: Intake Meeting Request - [Your Full Name] - Upcoming Freshman

Dear Disability Support Services Team,

My name is [Your Name], and I am an incoming student for the upcoming semester. My student ID number is [Your Student ID Number].

I am writing to formally request an intake interview to establish academic accommodations for my classes. In high school, I utilized accommodations to support my learning profile.

I have attached my supporting documentation to this email. Please let me know what dates and times you have available for an intake meeting over the next two weeks.

Thank you for your time and support,

[Your Name]

[Your Phone Number]

Subject: Intake Meeting Request - [Your Full Name] - Upcoming Freshman

Dear Disability Support Services Team,

My name is [Your Name], and I am an incoming student for the upcoming semester. My student ID number is [Your Student ID Number].

I am writing to formally request an intake interview to establish academic accommodations for my classes. In high school, I utilized accommodations to support my learning profile.

I have attached my supporting documentation to this email. Please let me know what dates and times you have available for an intake meeting over the next two weeks.

Thank you for your time and support,

[Your Name]

[Your Phone Number]

Script B: Email to a Professor

Subject: Accommodations Letter - [Your Name] - [Course Name and Section Number]

Dear Professor [Professor's Last Name],

I am a student in your [Course Name] class, meeting on [Days/Times class meets].

The Disability Support Office has approved my academic accommodations for this semester, and my official letter is attached to this email. Specifically, I will be utilizing [list 1 or 2 key accommodations, e.g., 50% extended time on exams / permission to record lectures].

I want to make sure I am following your specific classroom procedures for arranging these. Would you have 5 minutes after our next class, or during your office hours, to briefly connect about this?

Thank you, and I look forward to your class this term.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

Step 3: Workplace Scripts (Job / Internship / Apprenticeship)

Script A: Formal Email to HR (Requesting Accommodations Under the ADA)

Subject: Request for Reasonable Accommodation -
[Your Name]

Dear [HR Representative Name or Supervisor Name],

I am writing to formally request a reasonable workplace accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding my role as a [Your Job Title].

To perform my daily duties most effectively, I require a minor adjustment to my work environment. Specifically, I am requesting [state your accommodation clearly, e.g., a quiet workspace away from high-traffic areas / a consistent weekly shift schedule / written daily task lists rather than verbal instructions].

This accommodation will directly help me optimize my focus, maintain accuracy, and meet all performance goals. I am happy to provide documentation from my medical provider if required.

Please let me know a convenient time this week when we can discuss this further.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

Script B: Verbal Script for On-the-Spot Direct Support

"Thanks for walking me through this task, [Supervisor Name]. To make sure I complete this exactly how you want it and don't miss any of the details, I want to capture it accurately. Can I write down these steps real quick while you say them, or could you send those bullet points to me in a quick email or text so I have a checklist to follow?"

Step 4: Workplace Communication Blueprint (Sensory & Feedback Management)

Script A: Requesting a Sensory or Executive Functioning "Reset"

"Hi [Supervisor Name], I am experiencing a brief moment of sensory overload right now. To ensure I stay safe and keep my work accurate, I need to step away for [5 / 10] minutes to reset. I will complete [mention a specific task] immediately when I return to my station. Thank you for understanding."

Script B: Clarifying Vague or Confusing Feedback

Subject: Clarifying Questions regarding feedback on [Project/Task Name]

Dear [Supervisor Name],

Thank you for sharing your feedback on my recent work with [Project/Task Name]. I want to make sure my next version meets your exact standards.

To help me implement your notes accurately, could you clarify [choose one: the specific format you prefer / which sections I should prioritize rewriting / the exact deadline for the new draft]? If it is easier, I am free for a 5-minute sync at [suggest a time].

Best regards,

[Your Name]

PART 5: PARENT & FAMILY COMPANION GUIDE

Shifting family dynamics during the senior year is critical for postsecondary success.

The Role Transition Matrix

- **High School Focus: The Parent as "Manager"**
 - *Action:* Parent schedules meetings, speaks to teachers, monitors assignment portals daily, and requests accommodations on behalf of the student.
 - *Impact:* Student remains passive; systemic structures maintain stability.
- **Adult/Postsecondary Focus: The Parent as "Consultant"**
 - *Action:* Student leads meetings, communicates directly with professors/HR, and tracks deadlines. Parent sits in the background, offering advice only when asked by the student.
 - *Impact:* Student builds autonomy; self-advocacy muscle is developed before failure occurs.

Conversational & Coaching Best Practices for Families

- **Implement the "Wait 24 Hours" Rule:** If your student encounters a minor roadblock (e.g., a scheduling conflict, a missing grade, a confusing task), wait 24 hours before stepping in. Force the student to open their toolkit and choose a script to handle it independently first.
- **Establish Weekly Chats:** Replace daily micro-management ("Did you do your homework?") with a structured, weekly Sunday afternoon check-in. Review their transition progress together as collaborative peers.
- **Validate Task Paralysis:** Understand that procrastination is often a symptom of executive dysfunction or anxiety, not laziness. Instead of ordering them to "start working," ask: *"What is the very first micro-step of this task that we can map out together?"*

PART 6: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PORTFOLIO

Incorporate these specific digital tools into the student's tech log based on their functional cognitive profiles.

1. Note-Taking & Auditory Processing Support

- *Recommended Tools:* smart audio-recording pens.
- *Functional Purpose:* Bridges the gap for students who struggle to process rapid verbal lectures while simultaneously trying to write comprehensive notes. Allows students to live-tag audio moments for later review.

2. Executive Functioning & Task Breakdown

- *Recommended Tools:* **Goblin.tools** (Free AI task deconstructor) or structured visual routine planners.
- *Functional Purpose:* Breaks down abstract, overwhelming commands (e.g., "Write a 5-page research paper") into highly structured, bite-sized micro-tasks, lowering activation barriers.

3. Reading, Literacy, & Comprehension Access

- *Recommended Tools:* **Speechify**, advanced text-to-speech extensions, or reading/writing toolbars.
 - *Functional Purpose:* Optimizes independent reading comprehension by converting digital textbooks, syllabi, or training documents into multi-modal auditory tracks.
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PART 7: GOOGLE DOCS TRANSITION DASHBOARD: MY BRAIN OPERATING SYSTEM

(Directions for Student: Fill out this card, take a screenshot of it on your phone, and save it to your phone's 'Favorites' photo folder for instant access.)

1. MY PROFILE

- **Student Name:** _____
- **My Primary Pathway:** [] 4-Year University [] Community College [] Job/Trade School
- **My Top 2 System Strengths:**
 1. _____
 2. _____

2. MY SYSTEM SUPPORT TOOLS

- **My Core Approved Accommodations:**
 - _____
 - _____
- **My Essential Assistive Tech Tools:**
 - Tool 1: _____ (Used for: _____)
 - Tool 2: _____ (Used for: _____)

3. CRITICAL POSTSECONDARY CONTACTS

- **Campus DRC or Workplace HR Contact:** _____
- **Phone Number:** _____ **Email:** _____
- **My Family Consultant Support Line:** _____

4. SENSORY OVERLOAD / TASK PARALYSIS RESET SCRIPT

(Read this silently or hand it to a supervisor or peer if your system freezes)

"My environment is currently giving my system too much data to process right now, causing a temporary transition block. I am completely safe, but I need to step away to a quiet space for 10 minutes to reset my focus. I will return to my responsibilities as soon as my system recovers. Thank you for your patience."

PART 8: GENERAL EDUCATION & CTE TEACHER REFERENCE SHEET

Teachers can support seniors using this toolkit by integrating these four direct instructional shifts.

Support Category	What to Look For in Class	Immediate Classroom Action Step
Scaffolding Self-Advocacy	A student approaching you with their completed Step 2 Worksheet script or emailing an accommodation query.	Validate, don't just sign. Say: <i>"Thank you for bringing this to my attention. Let's look at the syllabus together and map out exactly how we will implement this for the upcoming project."</i>
Executive Functioning Shift	A student missing long-term milestone dates or struggling with large, abstract assignments.	Deconstruct the timeline. Instead of giving a due date 4 weeks out, provide 3 mandatory checkpoint dates (e.g., Topic Chosen, Rough Outline, Final Polish). Recommend tools like <i>Goblin.tools</i> for micro-steps.
Assistive Technology Integration	A student using a smartphone app, laptop extension, or smart pen during an independent lecture.	Normalize the utility. Ensure the student isn't penalized under general "no phone/no tech" rules. Treat the technology as a standard learning utility, reducing social stigma in front of peers.
Sensory Overload & Safety	A student showing signs of severe fatigue, agitation, or utilizing an emergency sensory "reset" script.	Honor the script immediately. Allow the student to use their pre-negotiated quiet space or take a 5-minute hallway reset without drawing excessive attention to them or demanding an explanation in front of the class.

PART 9: LEGAL REMINDERS FOR FACULTY (IDEA VS. ADA)

High school teachers must understand the structural legal cliff students face at graduation to emphasize why self-advocacy training is an absolute legal necessity.

Legal Dimension	 K-12 High School (IDEA Law)	 Adult Postsecondary & Workplace (ADA / Section 504)
Primary Goal	Ensures Success. The school district must provide services so the student passes and progresses.	Ensures Equal Access. The institution only removes structural barriers. The student must prove they are "otherwise qualified" to perform on their own merit.
Identification Burden	The School's Duty. The district is legally required to identify, test, and diagnose students with disabilities under "Child Find" mandates.	The Student's Duty. The student must self-disclose, provide current paperwork, and formally request accommodations. No administrator or employer will seek them out.
Curriculum Alteration	Allowed. Teachers can shorten assignments, alter grading rubrics, or change testing formats based on a student's IEP.	Strictly Forbidden. Higher education and employers <i>never</i> modify fundamental course requirements or core job duties. Standards remain identical to peers.
The Paperwork Lifecycle	Active Document. The IEP or 504 plan is legally binding on the high school staff and updated annually.	Informational Only. The IEP expires upon graduation. It is treated merely as historical evidence by college DRC offices or workplace HR.

PART 10: STUDENT PROGRESS TRACKING SPREADSHEET LAYOUT

Build an internal tracking sheet in Google Sheets using these exact column parameters to manage your senior transition caseload data.

- **Column A:** Student Name (*Text: Last, First*)
 - **Column B:** Primary Pathway (*Dropdown: 4-Year / Comm College / Trade / Workforce*)
 - **Column C:** Exit Interview Date (*Date: MM/DD/YYYY*)
 - **Column D:** IEP/504 Docs Updated (*Checkbox: Yes/No*)
 - **Column E:** State Voc Rehab Linked (*Checkbox: Yes/No/NA*)
 - **Column F:** Primary Assistive Tech (*Text: e.g., Glean, Speechify, None*)
 - **Column G:** One-Pager Completed (*Checkbox: Yes/No*)
 - **Column H:** One-Pager Backup Location (*Dropdown: Google Drive / Phone Favorited / Printed*)
 - **Column I:** Notes / Next Steps (*Text String: e.g., "Needs quiet housing form filed"*)
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PART 11: OREGON & REGIONAL TRANSITION RESOURCES DIRECTORY

Connect your students and families directly to these local state-level entities and regional portals to anchor their post-high school support framework.

- **Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Inclusive Services**
 - *Purpose:* Establishes state standards, administrative guidelines, and best practices for dyslexia and learning differences across Oregon public schools.
 - *Application:* Reference for local educational compliance and tracking student transition metrics within state-regulated frameworks.
 - **IDA Oregon "College Ahead!" Transition Portal**
 - *Web Hub:* <https://or.dyslexiaida.org>
 - *Purpose:* A specialized regional portal curated by the International Dyslexia Association Oregon Branch featuring college-readiness checklists and student peer networks.
 - *Application:* Distribute this direct hub link to students and parents during senior exit interviews to explore college readiness metrics.
 - **IDA Oregon Parent & Family Support Network**
 - *Web Hub:* <https://or.dyslexiaida.org>
 - *Purpose:* Resource network designed to help families map out initial transition strategies and connect with community parent-support circles.
 - *Application:* Link families to this portal during transition planning meetings to reinforce the "Manager to Consultant" pivot framework.
 - **Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services**
 - *Web Hub:* <https://oregon.gov>
 - *Purpose:* State agency providing job coaching, assistive workplace technology funding, and supported job placements for neurodivergent adults.
 - *Application:* Counselors should use the spreadsheet tracker to confirm a formal VR referral is completed at least 6 months before graduation for workforce/trade-bound seniors.
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