

Can I go to college?

College is a personal choice. Some people choose to go to college while others choose to join the workforce. Having MPS or ML should not prohibit you from attending college and accomplishing your educational goals.

Will my Individual Educational Plan (IEP) transfer?

Yes! When you start the transition from high school to college, you will want to make an appointment with your Disability or Special Needs Department at your college. They will request copies of your physician's letter regarding your diagnosis and your IEP. Don't worry, your high school should have all of this information in your file. If you did not have an IEP in high school, you will need to have your doctor fill out a form stating the restrictions and limitations that your diagnosis causes, and why their services will benefit you. This usually can be faxed or emailed over, and should not require an appointment with your doctor.

Accommodations?

Not all colleges have the same accommodations, but some examples typically provided are:

- Quiet testing areas
- Extra time for exams and quizzes
- Electronic or audio form of textbooks and handouts
- Note taking programs or a scribe
- Priority registration
- Copying and print capabilities for free

Physical needs and college?

Physically getting around campus can be challenging for someone with MPS or ML, but it is not impossible. Many campuses have shuttle systems for transportation assistance. If your campus does not have a shuttle service, there are still things you can do to make it easier. Sometimes, the littlest changes make the biggest difference. It's important to keep the amount of items you carry, to a minimum. A rolling briefcase or backpack, (preferably one with four wheels) will keep the strain off of your bones and joints. If that's not something you're comfortable with, keep your items to a minimum. Try to be as paperless as possible. An electronic keeper of all your assignments and notes, on one lightweight device, will provide optimum organization and less items.

Living on campus/ Getting to college?

Moving away from home and living on campus can be challenging for any student, but for someone with MPS or ML, there are unique challenges that need to be addressed. Prior to arriving to college students are often asked to fill out an application regarding their housing selection criteria. During this process, you are encouraged to reach out to both the Office for Students with Disabilities and Student Housing Office, to ensure you are placed in a living situation that optimizes your needs. Such requests can include wheelchair accessible rooms, private bathrooms, close proximity to classes and campus, as well as rooms fitted for deaf and hard of hearing students. With these requests, most colleges place you with a roommate(s) to

ensure a full college experience, *unless otherwise noted in your request not too*. In attending events on campus, most schools provide some type of transportation service. Look into scheduling the transportation ahead of time, for a timely arrival.

If you decide to live off campus while attending college, there are often transportation resources to aid in attending classes. Often times there are contracts with ride sharing services such as Lyft and Uber, so that students within a certain distance from campus, can receive free rides to, and from the school. Furthermore, your tuition often includes access to public transportation in your colleges town which can help with accessible options to assist with all independent transportation needs.

Lastly, moving away from home can be hard not only physically, but emotionally. Most colleges have free 24 hours a day on-campus resources for students to speak to a therapist and receive counseling. Be sure to secure a list of these important resources.

Paying for college

Paying for college can be overwhelming, especially if you are on SSI/SSDI, but it's possible. Apply for Federal Student Aid (FASFA), consider vocational rehabilitation services for additional college information, and the National MPS Society also has a Continuing Education Scholarship program that can help you reach your educational goals.

Textbooks are expensive, but there are ways to save on textbooks. Start with your college library. There are copies of your textbook available for use, but you're not usually able to check them out. You may be allowed to use photocopy. Sometimes, professors will have an electronic version available on the library website for download at low, or no cost.

Renting textbooks is also a great way to save money. Amazon and Chegg, are reliable websites that allow you to rent textbooks at a reasonable price, and they're delivered to your house so you don't have to pick them up.

Lastly, sometimes colleges have Facebook groups that help you buy, sell, or exchange your textbooks with other classmates. It's worth looking exploring this option. You can find these groups by searching a variation of: [Your College] textbook exchange.

Balancing Therapies and College

College equates to independence with your time and schedule. You will be able to schedule classes and assess the amount of time required for your individual therapy needs. Some colleges don't have classes on Friday's, so scheduling therapy days then may be the best option. If your classes are Monday-Friday, you may want to look into online courses to free up your schedule.

Advocating for yourself

Be aware that if your school doesn't have the resources or accommodations you need, you have the right to advocate for yourself to make sure your needs are met. Start with your Disability Resources Office, their mission is to help advocate for you and all students living with a disability. Voice your concerns and provide possible solutions. If that does not work, there are often places on campus such as Office of Student Affairs or outside resources in your community, that you can voice your concerns and get help in receiving necessary accommodations.