

# American Autism Association

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## College Programs for Students with Autism

Navigating the college application process can be extremely difficult for applicants on the autism spectrum. Here are some established unique programs that caters to students with special needs both academically and socially.

### Adelphi University, Bridges to Adelphi Program

**The Bridges to Adelphi Program** is designed to enhance college life for students with nonverbal learning disabilities by providing help with organizational skills, time management, independent living skills and social skills training.

- Each student in the program meets with an academic coach and learning strategist twice a week. The meetings will focus on time management, goal setting, problem solving, executive functioning and social skills, etc.
- Twice a week, students have the opportunity to attend open group social skills and support meetings with other Bridge to Adelphi students.
- There are also monthly group social activities – on and off campus.
- Each student is paired with a student mentor that they meet with weekly.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### Drexel University, Autism Support Program

The aim of the **Drexel Autism Support Program** is to promote success and improve quality of life among Drexel students with autism and related disorders by providing free and confidential autism-focused support services. Our orientation endorses self-determination and appreciation of strengths of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs).

- Available to all Drexel students free of cost for autism focused services and support.

- Students will receive individual peer mentoring, in which they meet and work for two to four hours each week.
- Seminars are held to help promote an understanding of ASD in college, such as situations in residence halls, with peer mentors, etc.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Eastern Michigan University, College Supports Program**

**The College Supports Program** offered by the Autism Collaborative Center is a fee for service program for EMU students with Asperger's Syndrome and related social communication disorders. The individualized support services go above and beyond those offered free of charge to all students with disabilities at EMU by the Disabilities Resource Center.

- Includes option for life and social skills support, ongoing consultations with faculty and housing services, off campus support, mentoring, individual meetings, counseling and parent support.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Eastern University, The College Success Program (CSP)**

**The College Success Program (CSP)** for Students Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder is designed to maximize students' potential as they live and learn within a caring Christian community. Dedicated to helping students living with ASD maximize their potential during the college years as they prepare for life after graduation.

- Program assists students in developing academic responsibility, by supporting them with academic goal setting and planning methods to achieve such goals.
- [CSP](#) helps students develop a stronger sense of social interaction, and use strategies that will enhance students ability to cope with campus life and understand social relationships.
- [CSP](#) aids students with acquiring independence, helping them develop the necessary everyday skills they need to live in a residence hall. In addition, they will help students understand campus culture.
- With accompanying peer mentors, students will attend campus events and explore areas surrounding campus.

Learn more on their [website](#).

**Fairleigh Dickinson University, COMPASS**The **COMPASS Program** is an individually tailored, comprehensive, academic and social support program for up to six college students with Asperger's Syndrome in each incoming class.

- A two year program that focuses on helping students strengthen their academic and social abilities, to help build new abilities, and to promote progress for their future in independent living.
- Each student will receive two hours of individualized academic support every week, one hour of individual counseling, and one group therapy session weekly.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Marshall University, College Program for Students with Asperger's Syndrome**

**The College Program** provides individualized skill building and therapeutic support to degree seeking students with Autism Spectrum Disorders through a mentored environment while navigating a college experience at Marshall University.

- Program focuses on academic support, social skill development, and independent living skills.
- Each student sets personal goals, while developing strategies to meet their needs.
- The program focuses on helping students through college, and focus on applying these skills in their future career.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Mercyhurst College – Asperger Initiative at Mercyhurst (AIM)**

**The Asperger Initiative at Mercyhurst (AIM)** is designed for students who, while exhibiting superior intellectual ability, face challenges in executive functioning and social interactions.

- Program focuses heavily on both academic and social competence.
- Students will receive strong academic support. They will receive priority registration, individualized course planning. Weekly meetings with academic advisors to monitor progress and executive functioning, collaboration with staff, note takers, tutors, etc.

- Students will receive strong social support. They will receive a single room placement in residence halls, attend social skill groups, have group outings, have access to a private lounge, be paired with peer mentors etc.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Rochester Institute of Technology, Spectrum Support Program (SSP)**

**RIT's Spectrum Support Program (SSP)** is one of the largest formal programs in the nation focused on meeting the unique needs of highly capable college students on the autism spectrum. The Spectrum Support Program provides individualized and small group support to assist students with the initial transition to life at RIT and help ensure continued success through graduation.

- Each student is paired with an [SSP](#) Peer Coach and receives individualized support and guidance in the transitional period of their first year in college. After the primary year, students meet monthly with an SSP staff member to assist with problem solving, advocacy, use of resources, etc.
- [SSP](#) offers five zero credit courses that have been created specifically for students with ASD to deliver skill development and a social setting for SSP students.
- [SSP](#) focuses on helping develop strong executive functioning skills aimed at academic success. [SSP](#) also provides social events for its program participants.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Rutgers University, College Support Program**

**The College Support Program** is designed to be a bridge for students on the autism spectrum as they learn to identify and access the community and support services of the university.

- Each student is assigned a coordinator that they meet with at least once a week, whom assists them in identifying and meeting academic, organizational, social and life skills.
- Each student is assigned a peer mentor for the year. Students can attend optional social events with other members of the [College Support Program](#).
- The center holds parent workshops, and provides referrals for individual psychotherapy or counseling.

- Students in the program will receive help in navigating the campus, identifying campus resources, managing life skills, help with the transition to dorm rooms, planning and preparing for employment, etc.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### University of Alabama, ASD College Transition Support Program (UA-ACTS)

The guiding purpose of **UA-ACTS** is to facilitate a campus environment that promotes an enjoyable and successful college experience for students with ASD in preparation for their future endeavors.

- [UA-ACTS](#) provides individualized services to help students acquire skills for self-advocacy, daily living, and social interactions that will aid their future as an independent adult.
- Each student is paired with a peer mentor, who they meet with two to three times a week to help with executive functioning and social skills, and to also keep track of student's progress throughout the semester.
- Group meetings for program participants are every two weeks, with varying discussion topics.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### University of Arkansas, Autism Support Program

The goal of the **University of Arkansas Autism Support Program** is to provide the intensive assistance students with high functioning autism, Asperger's Syndrome, PDD-NOS, and non-verbal learning disability need in order to be successful in college. Our students are matriculated University of Arkansas undergraduates who have the cognitive abilities to be in college but require more help than their typical peers to complete a college degree.

- All students participating in the [Autism Support Program](#) receive assistance in registering, picking classes, note taking, test taking, and making schedule changes. Staff keeps close communication with student's professors in order to ensure that any problems will be addressed.
- Integration into life at the University is a large aspect of the program, along with preparing students for life after college.

Learn more on their [website](#).

## University of Connecticut, Strategic Education for Students for Autism Spectrum Disorder (SEAD)

The **SEAD Program** focuses on assisting students on the autism spectrum with understanding, achieving and developing a pathway to success.

- Students design own program for [SEAD](#), choosing what they need to focus on. Students have access to more resources, strategies, and technologies.
- Program consists of meeting with a Graduate Assistant on a weekly basis to assist student in a variety of areas – such as building social and interpersonal skills, understanding their disability in relation to how it effects college, and to provide support and mentoring for each student.

Learn more on their [website](#).

## University of North Florida, THRIVE

**THRIVE** seeks to provide supplemental strategic supports for degree-seeking students with ASD at UNF. With additional services in social communication skills, independent living skills, and career development skills, **THRIVE** continues to support students across all facets of UNF from freshmen to graduate students. This is to ensure that **THRIVE** students at UNF have the greatest opportunities for success within the collegiate environment with generalizable skills to life beyond UNF. **THRIVE** believes that these basic supplemental services should be provided to students at no additional cost, therefore, involvement in **THRIVE** is free for eligible participants.

- Each student is paired with a [THRIVE](#) coach, in which they can meet with up to three times a week – creating goals, helping adapt to college life, etc.
- Focuses heavily on preparing students for future success during and after college.
- Students have the opportunity to live in [THRIVE](#) housing in a residence hall, with other members of [THRIVE](#).

Learn more on their [website](#).

## University of Tennessee Chattanooga, MoSAIC

The **MoSAIC Program** provides a multifaceted academic and social support program for college students with Autism Spectrum disorders.

- A yearlong course in which students develop executive functioning and social skills. The class meets weekly to learn about the impact ASD have on them individually.
- Students will meet twice a week with a Life coach to set weekly goals and create a plan on how to achieve them.
- Students also have a peer mentor that they meet with weekly, to help apply social strategies learned in the course, and apply them to real world settings.
- Students will have a study plan, no less than four hours of supervised study time each week,
- Program also consists of monthly social strategy application activities. These activities can range from practicing specific social situations to visiting potential job locations.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Western Kentucky University, Kelly Autism Program (KAP) Circle of Support**

To provide an educational, social and supportive environment so that individuals from the age of seven through adulthood who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder can achieve their potential as independent, productive and active community citizens. Our mission is to serve as one state and national model for comprehensive opportunities for these individuals and their families.

- [KAP](#) provides students with classroom adaptations such as extended time in a quiet environment, note takers, books on tape, etc.
- Each student participating will be put into a single room in the residence halls, in a quiet living environment.
- [KAP](#) provides mandatory study tables for students four days a week for three hours at a time. During this time, training executive functioning skills and tutoring are addressed.
- Each student is paired with a mentor from the [KAP](#) staff, in which they meet with on a weekly basis.
- The mentors will help students immerse themselves on campus in organizations, classrooms, etc..

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Western New England University, Connections Mentoring Program**

Recognizing the many transition issues that new students experience and that social, peer-related forms of support can often serve as a buffer against the normal stressors of the transition into college, we have created a program to facilitate a **Connections Mentoring Support Program** for students on the Autism Spectrum and for students with AD/HD.

- Each student is different; therefore each student gets different accommodations through the program depending on their needs.
- Students will receive tutoring, academic monitoring and mentoring, as well as help with organization and study skills.
- Students may receive extended time for assignments, essays, or exams; they may also receive a note taker if necessary.

Learn more on their [website](#).

### **Not interested in any of these colleges?**

Look into **AHEAD**. **AHEAD** is a nationwide program that has served students in various locations around the country. **AHEAD** provides coaching and mentoring support to improve social interactions, self-advocacy, organizational skills, and communication for students. With **AHEAD**, staff meets with students twice a week to set personal and academic goals, and creating a plan to achieve said goals. **AHEAD** helps students on a social level, by helping them build relationships with peers, professors, etc. on and off campus. Please contact them via [email](#) or visit their [website](#) for more information.

Another program that is similar to **AHEAD** is the **College Autism Spectrum (CAS)**. **CAS** not only helps students during college, but also helps them before college, throughout the application process. For student, the **CAS** can help them work with the disability office on campus, meet with students and act as a mentor, help them set goals, help with executive functioning and social skills, etc. For parents, the program will help them through deciding what college may be best for their child, and primarily keep a strong communication with parents to inform them of where their child stands throughout the school semester. For more information [email](#) them, visit their [website](#), or call them at 860 337 1788.