



Book Review:
***Ready for Take-Off: Preparing Your Teen with
ADHD or LD for College***

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As any parent knows, the teen years can be a complex time of transition for the entire family. Older adolescents desire a growing amount of independence but may wait until the last minute to start working on big projects such as college applications. Parents want to support their son's or daughter's emerging autonomy, but worry that important deadlines such will be completed poorly or not at all. When teens have learning disabilities (LD) and/or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD or ADHD), concerns about organization, time management, and motivation can become even more intense. While these situations create important "teachable moments," they can also result in frustration, open conflict, and even tears. What's a parent to do?

Dr. Theresa Laurie Maitland, Coordinator of the Academic Success Program for Students with LD/ADHD at UNC-Chapel Hill, and Dr. Patricia Quinn, a developmental pediatrician and international expert on ADHD, have co-authored a book that offers practical help. Their easy-to-read paperback, ***Ready for Take-Off: Preparing Your Teen with ADHD or LD for College*** (Magination Press, 2011), introduces parents to the communication and organizational skills used by ADD coaches. ADD coaches help clients (including high school and college students) clarify goals, develop realistic plans, and maintain focus on their goals over time. Interestingly, coaches are more apt to ask questions rather than tell a client how to accomplish a goal. They help clients stop, reflect, and become more accountable for actually doing what they say they intend to do. Clients report becoming more organized and calmer when working with coaches.

Dr. David Parker, CRG's Postsecondary Disability Specialist, recently worked with a Wayne State University research team to conduct the first national study of ADD college coaching. The researchers studied 110 students with ADHD and/or LD on ten different U.S. campuses. Students who were coached demonstrated significantly higher "executive functioning" skills (e.g., organization and time management) and higher levels of psychological well-being than the students who were not coached. Read more about this study at <http://www.edgefoundation.org/information/research/>.

Ready for Take-Off uses realistic vignettes to help parents identify situations in which they could use coaching techniques with their own son or daughter. While the book's focus is on helping high schoolers get ready for college (or succeed in college if they are already there), parents can apply these techniques to other types of conversations, too. Examples include Tom forgetting about a science poster due tomorrow, Heather reporting that she has failed to turn in many assignments, and Ella having

procrastinated on several papers that are all due on the same day. The authors explain what they call “enabling” responses (well-intended efforts to help the teens in which the parents end up doing most of the work) before explaining coaching approaches that keep the student in the driver’s – or pilot’s – seat. The book also provides practical checklists and worksheets that can be copied and filled out. These include *Holding a Coaching Conversation Worksheet*, *The College Readiness Survey for Teens*, and a *Personalized College Readiness Program Worksheet*, among others.

This book can be a useful tool for parents and teens during the transition to college. Learning how to think and act like a coach takes time, but Dr. Maitland and Dr. Quinn offer many practical examples that parents can utilize right away.

This fall, CRG will offer a parents’ book club based on this book in which parents learn coaching skills while helping their sons or daughters with college transition issues. Participants will read and discuss the book over six sessions, practice and share their experiences with coaching skills, and receive additional resource information about successful transitions to college. The group will be run by Dr. David Parker, CRG’s Postsecondary Disability Specialist. For more information, please call CRG at 575-9111.