



The Think Inclusive Podcast

Season 10, Episode 6

Meg Grigal and Cate Weir | Inclusive Higher Education for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Audio Transcript

Tim Villegas: Meg Grigal and Kate Weir from Think College want you to know that inclusive, higher education for people with intellectual disabilities is within reach.

Meg Grigal: College gives you so many chances to grow mature, meet people, socially, explore different potential jobs. It is a place where many people go to start their life path and giving that option to people with intellectual disabilities opens a lot of doors for them.

Tim Villegas: And college isn't just for learners who have been included in K-12 general education settings.

Cate Weir: Even for those students where inclusion wasn't really as good as they might have wanted it to be. I hope they'll still consider looking at college and, and seeing where they can, they can go if that's something that they wanna do.

Tim Villegas: But how can learners with intellectual disabilities access these programs?

Cate Weir: I think it's important to know that for example, you don't have to have a regular high school diploma to apply to these programs. , if your district or your state is one that gives IEP diplomas or non-standard diplomas of some sort that does not put you those students out of reach of college.

Tim Villegas: My name is Tim Villegas. And you were listening to Think Inclusive. presented by MCIE. This podcast exists to build bridges between families, educators, and disability rights advocates to create a shared understanding of inclusive education and what inclusion looks like in the real world.

Tim Villegas: For this episode, I speak with Meg Grigal and Cate Weir from Think College about why it is important for individuals with intellectual disabilities to have the option to go to college. We discuss what inclusive post-secondary education programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities really look like. And how the data shows that these programs are successful with learners, getting jobs after graduation at three times, the rate of the national average.

Tim Villegas: Thank you so much for listening. And now my interview with Meg Grigal and Cate Weir from Think College.

Tim Villegas: Today on the podcast, we'd like to welcome Meg Grigal and Cate Weir from Think College. They're here to talk about all things college for people with intellectual disabilities Meg and Cate, Welcome!,

Meg Grigal: Thanks. Happy to be here.

Cate Weir: Thank you, Tim.

Tim Villegas: Meg, to get us started. Would you just introduce yourself to our audience and then after Meg, then Cate, you can do that as well.

Meg Grigal: Sure happy to hi everyone. I'm Meg Grigal I work at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston where I direct a number of federal grants. Most of them associated with expanding access to higher ed for people with intellectual disability.

Cate Weir: Hey, I'm Cate Weir. I work the same place , as Meg at UMass Boston. And my job title is that I'm the Project Coordinator for the Think College National Coordinating Center.

Tim Villegas: Why don't we just get started on why people should be thinking individuals with intellectual disabilities even going to college, why is that important?

Meg Grigal: Good question, Tim. Well, you know, while college isn't necessarily everybody's choice, when they leave high school, it is an option for everyone who doesn't have a disability or has a disability other than intellectual disability. And for a really long time, people with intellectual disabilities didn't even have the chance to think about it.

Meg Grigal: It was never offered as an option. And because college gives you so many chances to grow mature, meet people, socially, explore different potential jobs. It is a place where many people go to start their life path and giving that option to people with intellectual disabilities opens a lot of doors for them.

Tim Villegas: Cate, did you have anything to add?

Cate Weir: I always say pretty much the same kind of things. I, I just also think that that since this movement, if you will, of inclusive higher education, people with ID has been around for about 20 years. And it kind of aligns with the movement for inclusion in more inclusive settings for people in K-12 education.

Cate Weir: So as students were treated. In more typical ways and had more typical educational experiences in K12. I, I, I think that's really fed the desire to continue to have typical experiences after high school, including the choice to go to college.

Tim Villegas: In your experience who is more likely to go to an inclusive post-secondary program and student who has been included, you know, through K12 education or a student that has not been included.

Cate Weir: I think you're incredibly better prepared to go to college if you've been included throughout your educational experience that goes kind of goes without saying, the preparation is so much better. So those students have so many more of the experiences and skills that through that inclusive education that it makes it the transition, I think a lot easier.

Cate Weir: Also the expectation that you'll go to college, I think is increased dramatically when students are included with their typical peers. My only little provision about that is I don't want people to hear that and think, well, my kid we've been fighting for inclusion in K12. Don't do a good job in my district or my kid hasn't been able to benefit as much I don't want them to think.

Cate Weir: Well, then this isn't for my kid. So yes, it absolutely impacts positively their desire, their thinking about college, preparing for college, having the skills to go. But even for those students where inclusion wasn't really. As good as they might have wanted it to be. I hope they'll still consider looking at college and, and seeing where they can, they can go if that's something that they wanna do.

Tim Villegas: Meg, did you have anything to add?

Meg Grigal: Well, I agree with Cate. I, it, it, it really does help, but what we've. At least with the data we collect, we have one project which Cate mentioned earlier, the National Coordinating Center. And in that project, we work with colleges and universities all over the country that are receiving federal funds to develop or expand higher ed programs for students with ID and the students who are coming into those programs in many cases only had segregated instruction or specialized instruction.

Meg Grigal: And while they might have a few additional support needs. It might take them a little time to develop some of the academic skills. They need to navigate their coursework or even their employment experiences.

Meg Grigal: They make up for lost time in college. And sometimes that, that is an extra, you know, skill. The, the staff there have to help them with. But I agree with Cate, if, if you hadn't been included throughout your high school experience that doesn't preclude you. And in fact, I think you're gonna benefit as much if not more, because suddenly the world's gonna open to you and you're gonna find out, oh wow. I can do this. I think given the opportunity and the supports, any student who really, really wants to go to college and that motivation factor is the key. If they really want it, they can succeed.

Tim Villegas: So what I'm hearing is for, you know, families, even with young children who maybe have this dream, that their child will go to college. But for whatever reason, the message they're getting is maybe that's not a realistic expectation. Right?

Meg Grigal: Yeah, they hear that all the time.

Tim Villegas: Mm-hmm mm-hmm so you're, you're telling them to not be not be discouraged.

Meg Grigal: Yeah, I would agree. I think hope, and vision it sounds really soft and squishy, but parent expectations are with a, like granite when it comes to predicting students outcomes. So if a parent believes a student is gonna get a job or go to college or live independently, or have, you know, not live in poverty, those students are sometimes, , 20, 30, 40 times more likely to achieve those outcomes depending on the study and the data set, but parent expectations are bedrock. They will determine students outcomes far more than what an IEP says or what a student's testing or assessment says.

Tim Villegas: So why don't we define, like, what are these programs exactly, because I think there's a misunderstanding when we talk about college. That it's exactly the same path as a typical student. And let's say, you know, if the student doesn't have the grades, or doesn't have the, whatever it is, the thing that they need to get to go on that typical path to college, these inclusive post-secondary education programs, it's not a typical path. So help our audience understand what it is. And also for the parents who are.

Cate Weir: Well, I, I think it's important to know that for example, you don't have to have a regular high school diploma to apply to these programs. , if your district or your state is one that gives IEP diplomas or non-standard diplomas of some sort that does not put you those students out of reach of college.

Cate Weir: There is an alternative pathway into these programs. We hope that once you get in them, that you're having a very, very typical and authentic college experience taking courses and doing internships and going to social events and living on campus. But the pathway in is different. And I think this is where people you want people to understand that.

Cate Weir: SAT scores are not required. ACT typical grades or certain classes on your high school transcript, those typical things are not part of the application process for students going and applying to these programs. , but it is more kind of like, do you have a desire to go to college?

Cate Weir: Do you wanna get a job after college? Do you wanna work in a real, real work for real pay? Do you wanna live more independent as independently as you possibly can do your, do your parents want you to get a paid job and live as independently as you possibly can? So there's a different set of admission requirements and there's in a different admissions process. And then the program almost exclusively offer a non-degree pathway. So you're not earning in

a bachelor's degree or an associate degree. But you are earning hopefully a meaningful credential and perhaps a credential that focuses on a particular career goal of yours that may focus in areas of early childhood or Or forestry or, you know, whatever your areas of interest might be as a student. But they are so typically non-degree programs with an alternative admissions process.

Tim Villegas: So graduates that complete the program. What do they go on to?

Meg Grigal: I will say it's hard for us to speak on behalf of all graduates

Meg Grigal: have data on all graduates. So what we generally draw is as the national coordinating center, we are charged with evaluating programs. There's an acronym called tips, ID it's transition, postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disability.

Meg Grigal: It's a very long, special eddy kind of name. It's a really good program. And it's been funded since 2010. And so since that time we've collected data on every program that received federal funds, every class, each student has taken every work experience students have had. And in 2016, we were finally allowed to collect some outcome data.

Meg Grigal: So, but again, this is, I just wanna, I, I never want people to think tips, Sid data. Represents all of the programs in the country, cuz it doesn't. But the outcomes are actually quite good. So we are seeing students. Leaving the programs employed at 67%. And that's paid employment. Paid employment means it's paid by the employer and it's at or above minimum wage.

Meg Grigal: And the, the national average for adults with intellectual developmental disabilities is 19%. So this is more than three times. Better outcomes. And, and we now have data for up to three years out. So it's not just, they had a job a year later or two years later. Now we're looking at data three years later and we're still having decent employment rates and they're also living more independently.

Meg Grigal: They have really high levels of satisfaction with their life. A smaller portion of students are continuing their post-secondary ed. They decided to go back to school either in a different program or maybe seeking to build on whatever credits they've acquired in their tips. Sid. So I think the emerging outcomes are really, really positive.

Tim Villegas: Yeah. It sounds like it. What do the programs look like? And , I know that's hard cuz you can't say what all of them look like, but I'm, I'm just gonna, I'm gonna pull it down to a very, , micro level because I was just recently at the division on autism and developmental disabilities conference in Tampa or Clearwater Florida and I to a presentation by the Arc of Jacksonville.

Tim Villegas: So I think it's University of North Florida, and their on campus transition program. And was nice cuz I don't, I don't think I've actually been to a, like a presentation by a program

that kind of laid it all out. So I I'm just using that as a touchpoint to ask some questions. So for instance, the students in their program audit typical classes Th their students take up a spot in that class.

Tim Villegas: So it's not like they're a visitor, they actually take up a spot in that class. If there's 20 spots, they take up a spot. The professors are asked whether they want to do this or not. and so, unlike. In K12, , where it's, it's like, well, you teach all kids in college.

Tim Villegas: It seems like that's maybe a little bit different. Right. And then the support specialist, I'm not sure what they're called. But the transition people in the program. work with the professor on adapting or modifying the syllabus for that particular student. So there's, , different learning objectives for that student. So is that sound pretty typical of how it works or are there some variations there, what does it actually look like for this, for a student to go to college, in an inclusive post-secondary.

Cate Weir: What you describe is, is somewhat typical. When, when I try to talk about this is like, kind of generally what to expect when I was speaking to families. Your students should be auditing classes based on their person center plan.

Cate Weir: So the, the choice of class is based on their interests, their career goals. They also have other kinds of learning experiences, ideally individualized learning experiences to help them perhaps become more independent. Learn a little bit about the soft skills that are needed to be successful at the workplace.

Cate Weir: And those, those are again, ideally done individualized in an inclusive way, natural settings. I like the example that you gave from the presentation you went to where the faculty member sort of has to agree for the student to be in their class.

Cate Weir: And that, you know, that really is part of it because one of the huge differences between high school and college is there is no mandate or right for students to go to college. It's a hard trip for families and students to take because they've been working so hard for 12 or 14 years to understand the entitlements, to understand what their student is, do what law protects their student to an environment where it's much more about asking permission and saying, is it okay with you?

Cate Weir: And, and people can say, no, it is not okay with.

Tim Villegas: OK.

Cate Weir: I think college programs, you know, once they're well established, hopefully they're working really hard to have strong collaborative relationships with their faculty and faculty are learning that this is a terrific experience to have a, a student with disabilities like this in their classroom and that they welcome it.

Cate Weir: And they're glad to have it, but at the bottom line, at the end of the day,

Cate Weir: A college can a faculty member can say, no, I don't want that student to take my class. And a college can say, we don't wanna have this program anymore. I mean, so it's, it's really kind of a different environment, which requires a different set of emphasis advocacy skills on the form of, on the part of parents and students and a big just before I finish on that advocacy piece, a big piece of what a lot of college programs are doing for families.

Cate Weir: Is hopefully supporting them to make the transition from being the parent of a kid who's under IDEA and you are in there every day, fighting and advocating and reminding about the law and the protections to the parent of a young adult who needs to be developing their own advocacy skills, their own voice, their own making their own choices.

Cate Weir: And in a, within an environment, which is a college setting that isn't. Isn't set up for a ton of family intervention. There's a certain amount. We'll have our family open houses and we'll maybe send a family a newsletters and, and we'll try to keep families involved, but certainly college faculty don't, don't speak to their students' parents.

Cate Weir: About what's going on in the classroom. They don't go to meetings with the F with the student's parents to, you know, update them on their, on whether they're doing a good job. So that's a big transition for families as well. And it's another thing that we, we work with programs about is to, is to acknowledge the difficulty of that transition and to support families through that transition.

Cate Weir: But it does, it does kind of have to occur. You didn't even ask me that question, but I kind of got there.

Tim Villegas: No, I'm no, I'm glad you brought it up. About, about expectations. Yeah, yeah. For parents. And I, while you said that, I was just thinking that, you know, you address the things that happen in the classroom, but, you know the students live basically live on campus. Right. I mean, for most of these programs.

Tim Villegas: So I would

Cate Weir: of the, yeah. Of about the 300 program,

Cate Weir: little over 300 programs about a little over a

Cate Weir: hundred of them are residential

Tim Villegas: Oh, okay. So not quite

Tim Villegas: half. Okay. All

Cate Weir: and it's premier, you know, there's a lot of community college programs or non residential, but then even sometimes on a campus that's residential the program may not offer residential support.

Cate Weir: So you do have to look at that.

Tim Villegas: So for those that do offer that residential support, what would be the, the at different expectations for the family? If, if a student lives on campus? I mean, I would imagine , you'd want to have as much independence as possible.

Cate Weir: Mm-hmm

Cate Weir: Talked a lot. You wanna talk?

Meg Grigal: I can

Tim Villegas: Meg, what do you think?

Meg Grigal: Well, you know, parents' expectations and what programs are gonna provide. Don't always align when it comes to the residential experience. So I think sometimes parents may expect, well, you're gonna help them wake up. And you're gonna help them clean their room.

Meg Grigal: And most programs will say no. You're a college student. You're gonna have to learn how to wake up and get to your class. And we'll give you support as you get started. And certainly students with intellectual disability, who've never lived away from home for even a short period of time might require some additional or more long term supports around that.

Meg Grigal: But the goal is the student participating like other college students and. What the program provides, I think should be students specific. Some students might need more supports than others. You know, lot of the programs use peer mentors as social supports. They might provide some academic or campus navigation support.

Meg Grigal: So they build in these mechanisms cuz what you don't want. is some staff person coming around, waking students up, this is about inclusion. This is about providing students with authentic college experiences and you know, what college students do?

Meg Grigal: They miss classes sometimes cuz they overslept and sometimes they don't do a great job on assignments. , I'm not saying you wanna plan to fail, but you wanna leave room for growth. And part of that is that dignity of risk piece. Let a student take a course and it doesn't go well, they're gonna reflect on why didn't that go?

Meg Grigal: Well, it was a big lecture class. I, I thought I liked early childhood. I hate little kids, you know, like. That's part of the learning. So making this perfect experience where everything goes, right. That's also not what I think

Meg Grigal: is the intention. And you have to help parents get to the point where they recognize that those blips, those trips, those, , diversions from what looks like success are actually part of the process.

Tim Villegas: Is there anything about from when you first started? this work till now. Is there anything that has really surprised you?

Cate Weir: I just happen to say something about that exact topic to somebody yesterday, we were just talking about this huge leap that it is for young people with intellectual disability to go and live on campus and live in their own dorm. And. Have some of these expectations with supports, but you're gonna get yourself up.

Cate Weir: You're gonna take your own medication. You're going to make it to classes on time and, and keep to a schedule that isn't the same every day. Remember college schedules. They're not every day nine to three so what we hear over and over and over again is. Incredibly proud students are of themselves. And that parents are like they never in their lives got themselves up without me getting them up for school. And now they're getting themselves up.

Cate Weir: Because the expectation is there. When the environment expects a lot of , you often rise the occasion and that seems to happen a lot. And the other thing is, we don't always hear, but we hear a fair amount when things.

Cate Weir: Don't go well, a student isn't terribly successful or a family's pretty disappointed with the level of support or, a program has a very challenging experience with a student at the national level. We're not gonna hear every one of those stories, but I said this cause we were talking about one of those stories we had heard and I thought, you know, it's kind of amazing how few times we do we hear these.

Cate Weir: It doesn't seem to happen all that much. You'd think that it would be. The riskiest thing in the world. And these students are, it's like, oh my gosh.

Cate Weir: Imagine all the things that can go wrong. That many things don't seem to go wrong. Or when they do they're, you know, they're managed by probably a combination of, of good staff in the programs and the college resources that themselves, because colleges are environments that are set up. support young people who are living alone, on their own for the first time. So in those ways, The systems that colleges have in place. They're pretty much what kids at ID need as well. Because they're the same thing that any 18 year old needs if they've never done their own laundry or never decided that they don't just have cake for dinner, that they can, if they want to just get all the soft serve, if they want and that's it for a week.

Cate Weir: And then they have to, they have to learn,

Tim Villegas: Right.

Cate Weir: to do that. So through a combination of the resources that are available. It seems like, gosh, this kind of goes pretty well. I mean over probably 10,000 students with intellectual disability, probably many more than that have participated in one of these programs and graduated and gone on to, to good jobs.

Cate Weir: And The world hasn't ended. Nothing terrible has happened. So I don't know. That's probably not a good example, but that's what surprised me

Tim Villegas: That's great. No, thank you for sharing that.

Tim Villegas: Meg, do you have any thoughts?

Meg Grigal: Well, I, when you brought up laundry, it just made me laugh because I have an 18 year old college, freshman who is going to school. And she said the first two or three weeks, she witnessed at least two or three of her peers cry when faced with doing their own laundry. These are not people with. Any identified disability had to call their parents and say, I don't know what to do.

Meg Grigal: They were all overwhelmed. And, and I think that's a beautiful thing, because guess what students with intellectual disability, aren't the only college kid who doesn't know how to do their laundry, or hasn't been responsible for certain things before. And one program, we were. Working with, during the planning stage, we were meeting with their residential services and, you know, we're really tiptoeing around.

Meg Grigal: Everybody's like, well, you know what we'd like is every student has their own dorm room. They get matched with a roommate and they're like, yeah, we do that for everybody. Get 'em in the system. And they're like, well, they might need some supports about independent living. They're like, yeah. We do that for everybody.

Meg Grigal: We have a how to do your laundry class for all incoming freshmen. We'll roll them right into that.

Cate Weir: right.

Meg Grigal: And it was just so affirming, like Kate said, like, this is how you learn. so I think we are sometimes underestimating the amount of available support and dis you know, discreet supports that the, the, the level everyone needs something different colleges work with working.

Meg Grigal: Parents, colleges work with parents of young children. These are all different student. Profiles. They're used to diverse learners. We're just adding a slightly different group of diverse learners, but they, they have done this stuff for years. So we're just, we're asking to tweak things to make it work for one additional set of diverse learners.

Tim Villegas: That's a great point so how many programs are available right now are maybe listed on your site? Do you have I'm I'm sure you have that data.

Meg Grigal: Yeah. It's like 312 I think. are in our public facing directory.

Tim Villegas: And so looking forward, do you have like a goal set in mind for like we would love for, or X number, more programs to be available or is, that's not something that you are,

Meg Grigal: Well, we, we don't fund programs. We don't have fun. Like we don't, and we don't get to determine who gets funds. Sometimes there's a misconception because. Is. Sometimes the only entity people might be aware of at the national level. They might think we have some input on who receives federal funds or grants.

Meg Grigal: And we, we don't, we, we, we apply just like everyone else for all of our federal dollars. So having said that we are working constantly with colleges and universities who come to us and say, Hey, we're trying to get something off the ground. Can you help us with some planning? Can you help us figure out staffing?

Meg Grigal: Can you help us understand how to set up inclusive course access or employment? So I guess I, I wouldn't say we have a target. I, what popped into my head was Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Like when will there be enough women on the court? Like when there's nine

Tim Villegas: yeah. When all of them are

Meg Grigal: so I think there will

Cate Weir: Yeah, we have, we have this part of our presentations When we are presenting about this topic and we'll say, isn't it great. There's 312 programs. And then we, then the next slide is that's 6% of the institutions of higher in the United States. So don't everybody get all comfy cozy. We ain't, we ever need to be When every higher ed program in the country has a welcome mat for students with ID, I will say we have met our target.

Tim Villegas: Yes. I love it.

Cate Weir: Yeah.

Tim Villegas: that. Oh so I just wanted to make sure we had a chance to talk about what is on think college.net and then who are the kinds of people that you want to talk to? So I, is it, you know, people in higher ed that are, you know, thinking about our program, is it parents, is it educators like who, who is your target audience with your site?

Meg Grigal: I'll do a, a brief overview, but Cate has been, Cate has really created our website over and over and over again. She has rebuilt this thing and retooled it based on the needs of

the people who come to us. But I would say everybody, you just mentioned him. We, we have created resources for families, for students, for educators, for transition educators for higher ed personnel, for peer mentors for program personnel.

Meg Grigal: I think program personnel is an emerging group because now the, the number of programs providing services and enrolling students has grown. And so has the need for their support training. So we've created a lot of mechanisms for both direct support and peer to peer support. But I'll let Kate talk about the website specifically.

Cate Weir: On think college.net. We have a lot of resources that describe all the different projects we have, because think college is kind of an umbrella for multiple projects. One of which is the national coordinating center that I work for.

Cate Weir: And then there's multiple others. That Meg , is involved with and other members of our staff. But primarily I think for the public, they can find out about all the training events that we're doing,

Cate Weir: There's recorded webinars. You can watch. There's a resource library. That's searchable by a number of different topic. So you can filter by the topic you're interested in. And we also create pages which are sort of curated resources

Cate Weir: Cuz the library has well over a thousand resources and it can be a little overwhelming. Of course, our college search list, also a. A quick link to our help desk it is a Monday through Friday help desk.

Cate Weir: But we try to be really, really responsive and we take questions from anybody on any topic related to post-secondary education. For students with intellectual disability, we have 16 technical assistance consultants, either on our staff or consulting with us who answer questions on a wide variety of subject.

Cate Weir: It's one of my favorite things. I and others talk to a lot of families who come to Think College and try really hard to sort of learn everything by reading and searching and clicking, and then just go, oh my God. I'm what I don't what next? And We'll get on the phone with you and sort of help you look through things or answer your questions and of course there's tons of resources for colleges and universities who are looking to develop or enhance the programs that they have as well.

Meg Grigal: Thanks, Cate. I, I wanna make sure folks in your listening audience also know that there's some kind of low touch stuff. If people wanna get involved, like we have. Affinity groups, which are just little communities of practice of people who get together like quarterly to talk about whether it's employment or social access on campus or VR.

Meg Grigal: So if somebody wants to just kind of come and sit and listen, you don't, you're not required to attend. You can just kind of bounce in and out. If you're interested in research,

there's one on research. There's one on state consortium development. So places that are kind of having a lot of programs developed and they wanna work together how to do that.

Meg Grigal: And then we also run a couple Facebook groups that are private. One's a parent Facebook group for parents to talk to parents about, this was my experience, or these are my questions I wanna hear from other parents. And then we have a program, staff, Facebook groups, so that program, people can quietly talk to other program people.

Meg Grigal: And I have to say during COVID when the whole world shut down We developed that resource. And we did some support groups for program staff who were madly, scrambling to shut down their campus, transition to online learning in some cases have students move home and this group of professionals are the most generous.

Meg Grigal: Supportive group. They came to the table, they were like, oh, we tried this, use this tool. We modified this. Here, you take it. They, they crowdsourced their solutions in such a dynamic and generous way. I gotta tell you, it was just, I've been in special ed or disability education work for 30 years. And it, it was phenomenal to witness how these people just had each other's backs.

Meg Grigal: So it's a, it's a good feel.

Cate Weir: Wanna just when you mentioned the groups, I just wanted to mention that we also have an emerging advocates group for students that we, that we do. That's it's run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities and that meets regularly. And. Right now, we have a very cool opportunity for college students with intellectual disability to apply, to be a think college policy advocate and get some training on policy advocacy.

Cate Weir: So those are the kinds of things that you can find when you stay in touch with us, by signing up for a newsletter once a month in your inbox with all the new, things we're developing and all the activities we're involved with.

Tim Villegas: That's a lot.

Tim Villegas: That's a lot. I'm I'm thank you for . Yeah. Thank you for laying all that out for our audience. And if you're listening and you are interested in anything that we talked about please visit [think college.net](http://thinkcollege.net) and use that help desk, you know?

Cate Weir: Absolutely.

Tim Villegas: Is there, is there anything else that you wanted to talk about while we're wrapping up? Anything else that we missed maybe.

Meg Grigal: I think I just wanna walk away or anybody who listen. Us walk away with this is possible. You know, when you asked about what, what are we surprised about when I started

this work in 1998? And everybody sort of looked confused when I mentioned it. I'm surprised that we've had federal funding. That's been sponsored, you know, completely supported by both political parties for 12 years.

Meg Grigal: I'm surprised that we've been able to have federal legislation support students getting federal student aid, this, the legitimacy of this field and its potential. And then I'm surprised I'm actually not that surprised, but I'm. Grateful this data that we now have 12 years of data supports our supposition from 15 years ago.

Meg Grigal: When we said, you know, what? If people with ID go to college, they're gonna have better outcomes. And the data supports it. These students can go to real classes and get real jobs and leave with a credential to get a better job.

Meg Grigal: So it is possible because it's happening and we have data. So I think like walk away knowing it's not just a nice idea.

Meg Grigal: It's actually the reality right now. And we need to make it the reality for more people.

Cate Weir: I'm gonna just say something about one more website we also have a, a student corner, so it's a page for students to learn more about that's written for them and hopefully helps them to explore themselves about the options and learning more about what it means to go to college.

Cate Weir: And we have. If you go to our website right on the homepage menu bar says students and families. And if you click down on that, you'll find the student corner and you'll also find the family resources page. And there's a lot of things on here that I think. We we're aiming it to families, but I think it would really helps transition educators as well, because it helps everybody just learn more about what does it mean to transition from high school to college?

Cate Weir: We talk about some ways you can use your IEP to get ready for college. We talk about skills that students Benefit from having when they go to college. There's lots of Student stories. So even though it says it's for families, I think families hopefully very can benefit from, from going there.

Cate Weir: But I think educators, as well as they begin to sort of try to be good ambassadors for this message to their students and families, because we hope that you will, as a special educator or any kind of educator that you at least know enough about it to. I know that it's possible. I know thousands of kids that have done it and continue to do it.

Cate Weir: And there's some ways that we can think about how we can prepare our students to go onto college we ought to be doing just that.

Tim Villegas: Well, Meg Grigal and Cate Weir. Thank you so much for your time and being on the Think Inclusive podcast.

Meg Grigal: Thanks for letting

Cate Weir: it's been our pleasure. Thank you.

Tim Villegas: Think Inclusive is written, edited and sound designed by Tim Villegas. And is a production of M C I E. Original music by Miles Kredich.

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