



Keep Achieving (*Kach*) at Brookdale

The Arc of Monmouth has collaborated with Brookdale Community College to address the needs of transitioning young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities ages 21 – 26, who have graduated from high school and would like to continue their education. The project will provide a variety of classroom and experiential learning at the college and in the community. The project will consist of six college semesters over a three-year period.

The Arc of Monmouth and Brookdale Community College have identified five areas of need for transitioning students to adult life: self-determination; employment or volunteer opportunities; post secondary education; vocational training; and involvement in the community, including social and civic affairs. In partnership, The Arc and Brookdale have planned a college experience for six individuals per year for a three-year period as follows:

- First Semester – Students will be introduced to the campus and become familiar with program expectations and what it entails to become a college student at Brookdale Community College. Students will learn to identify resources such as public transportation, the student handbook, and the college’s website. Students will seek opportunities for career exploration through assessment and classroom discussions.
- Second Semester – The Arc and Brookdale staff will enlist the services of peer mentors to provide support to students while on campus. The Arc will train peer mentors and introduce them to students. Students will learn the expectations of audit courses and will explore job sampling opportunities based on their assessments and through the career exploration process of the previous semester. Students may select audit courses to take in the following semesters and determine student organizations in which to participate.
- Third Semester – The students should be comfortable with their role as Brookdale students by the third semester. The focus of this semester is to continue course work and to begin job sampling based on the student’s abilities and interests in a variety of campus and community settings. Functional academics, life skills and social skills will also be continued throughout the semester. Students may select audit courses, student organizations and/or campus activities in which they want to participate.
- Fourth Semester – The focus of this semester is for the students to finalize a career path in preparation for finding a competitive job in the community and ensure they possess the skills necessary to maintain their employment. A career plan will be developed. Although functional academics, life skills and social skills will be continued throughout the semester, community integration, and greater reliance on work and community resources, including travel training, will be emphasized.
- Fifth and Sixth Semesters – This third year will emphasize employment and the supports related to maintaining it. Most of the day will be spent at the employment site with supports. Students should be able to navigate the campus independently and possess the ability to seek support if necessary.

At the completion of their college experience, students should gain the skills and confidence necessary for them to succeed in their chosen paid or volunteer career field.