



7 Things to Do to Support Your Child's Educational Future

Among basic steps: parents must plan to be involved in school and ask counselors, experts lots of questions.

1. Start in ninth grade (**or before!**) keeping track of your child's classes every semester. Knowing that all classes are not created equally, make sure each class counts toward high school graduation and toward college. Make sure the courses lead into a challenging course the following year that meet those same requirements.
2. Meet the counselor, and tell them you see college in your child's future. Ask questions. Ask the counselor to lay out a four-year course plan for your child in order to be on track for college. Keep in touch.
3. Learn about colleges. Start discussing with your child what they need in a college. Go to college fairs. Ask lots of questions.
4. Visit at least one college campus — it can be whatever is nearby. The goal is to reduce college anxiety that exists simply because of unfamiliarity. Next, try to visit colleges your child is interested in. Check for sponsored (free) opportunities to visit. Use virtual tours.
5. Prepare for and take the SAT or ACT. Any time something has a cost, ask how that fee can be waived.
6. Get college applications in advance, know what they require, and apply on time. Remember, applications include essays and references and can't be completed in an hour, or even a day. Plan for applications to take about a month.
7. Apply for financial aid. Research and apply for scholarships in your community and at the schools your child is applying to. Keep a calendar of deadlines and don't miss them.