



College Admissions Checklist for Parents: 9th Grade

- Continue talking about college and careers in a positive way.
- Continue making sure your child is in the right courses for her abilities, motivation, and goals. If she is bored and races through homework, push for more advanced classes.
- Resist the temptation to push special colleges. Instead, emphasize how many colleges there are.
- If your child wants to participate in everything and can't say no, help him narrow his interests and zero in on just one or two things he really loves.
- If your child doesn't have a lot of interests, help her/him explore their options and their passion.
- Encourage foreign language study.
- Visit a couple of colleges in a casual, fun way. If you are on vacation in a city, visit a campus as part of your itinerary.



College Admissions Checklist for Parents: 10th Grade

- Continue talking about college and careers without putting pressure on your child.
- Emphasize the importance of good grades and life balance.
- Meet with your child's counselor to make sure she is taking the right courses for the types of colleges she/he is interested in.
- Encourage your child to save his best school projects to include in an academic portfolio.
- Talk to the school counselor about taking a college admission pretest just for practice. The SAT pretest is known as the PSAT, and the ACT has PLAN. The scores will not be used for college admission. If your child is worried about her/her test-taking skills, the practice tests could be beneficial.
- Start researching college costs and getting your finances organized.
- Help your child hone in one activity, interest, or skill that she wants to cultivate. This can be a sport, an extracurricular activity like drama, or something unrelated to school like volunteering or hiking. Academic interests such as foreign languages and science club are great options.



College Admissions Checklist for Parents: 11th Grade

- Meet with a school or college counselor to make sure your child is on track with coursework and grades.
- Make sure your child takes the PSAT in October. This SAT prep test will give your child a ballpark idea of his test score potential. PSAT scores are not used for college admission but are used by some scholarship programs. Make sure your child knows it's important to do his best. If your child is planning to take the ACT instead of the SAT, consider the ACT prep test, which is called PLAN.
- Based on your child's pretest scores and goals, decide whether an SAT or ACT prep course is necessary.
- Make sure your child takes the SAT and/or ACT in spring.
- Work with your child and the school counselor to determine whether your child should take subject-specific SAT exams.
- Start researching financial aid.
- Continue cultivating your child's special interests. If he/she doesn't think he/she has anything to offer, help him discover his passion.
- Encourage your child to start researching specific schools. Instead of focusing on the one or two schools she is most familiar with, encourage her/him to search for schools that are a good fit for their personality, interests, and career goals.

- ❑ Motivate your child to attend college fairs and make the most of every opportunity to learn about schools.
- ❑ Consider a college tour for spring break. If you can't afford to travel out of state, visit local colleges that are similar in size to the schools your child is considering.
- ❑ Start working with your child on a list of schools. Make sure it includes at least two foundation schools—colleges your child can almost certainly gain admission to.
- ❑ Download the Common Application, which is used by more than 450 colleges, and go over it with your child so she'll know what a college application looks like.





College Admissions Checklist for Parents: 12th Grade

Summer Before 12th Grade

- Help your child find something to do over the summer related to her special interests or passions. For example, if he/she is passionate about the environment, she can volunteer for a conservation organization. If she adores volleyball, she might be able to attend camp. If she aspires to be a lawyer, perhaps she can intern at a law firm.
- Encourage your child to work on his/her personal essay, using topics listed on the Common Application. Help him/her brainstorm ideas. He/she won't want to juggle this important task during senior year, when he's already juggling schoolwork, test prep, and myriad other senior year activities.
- Consider using summer vacation time as an opportunity to visit a couple of colleges.
- Keep working together on a list of schools to apply to.

12th Grade Year

- Meet with your child's counselor to review your child's list of schools. Most students apply to four to 12 schools, but the final decision rests with the child and parents.
- If any of the schools require recommendations, talk to your child about the best people to ask to provide them.
- Note the application deadline for each school. Some colleges accept applications on a rolling basis and do not have a fixed deadline. Apply to these schools early! Their freshman classes could fill up quickly.

- ❑ Decide what type of admission your child will seek: early decision, early action, single-choice early action, or regular admission.
- ❑ Help your child create a calendar of deadlines and tasks related to her college admission applications.
- ❑ Determine whether your child should take the ACT and/or SAT again in October and November.
- ❑ Review applications and help your child gather necessary documents.
- ❑ Touch base with your child regularly to make sure she/he is filling out the applications.
- ❑ Send applications via mail or email.
- ❑ File the FAFSA and any other forms required by the colleges.
- ❑ Celebrate!
- ❑ Remind your child that she has to keep up her grades during the remainder of her senior year. It's not an urban myth that colleges have revoked offers of admission based on students' plummeting grades senior year.
- ❑ Support your child as college decisions roll in. Encourage her not to take the decisions personally.
Many schools receive far more qualified applicants than they can admit. Be flexible as you and your child find out what her options are.
- ❑ Exhale—and pat yourself on the back—when your child informs the college of his choice of his intent to enroll.

