

The Parents' Role in the College Process
Discover Rhodes
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Helpful Web Sites

COLLEGE TESTING INFORMATION

- SAT: (General information regarding registration, scoring, schedules and SAT Subject tests and AP exams.) www.collegeboard.com
- ACT: (General information regarding registration, scoring, etc.) www.act.org
- For information on how different colleges award credit for the AP tests, visit. www.collegeboard.com/testing

SAT & ACT TEST PREP COURSES

- College Board's SAT Preparation Program (includes official on-line prep course, official practice questions and practice tests, and SAT "Question of the Day.") www.collegeboard.com/testing
- ACT www.actstudent.org
- Test Prep Companies
 - www.review.com – Princeton Review
 - www.kaplan.com - Kaplan
 - www.petersons.com – Peterson's

COLLEGE SEARCH SITES

- www.collegesofdistinction.com - A Search-site for smaller, less well-known colleges with special programs
- <http://www.campustours.com/> - "Virtual" campus tours
- www.ctcl.org - *Colleges That Change Lives* - Book by Loren Pope

GENERAL COLLEGE INFORMATION AND HELPFUL PLANNING SITES

- All of the Test Sites listed above have college planning guides on their websites, see for example: www.collegeboard.com; www.petersons.com; www.kaplan.com; and www.review.com
- NACAC Web Resources for the College bound: "Steps to College" a free online newsletter for college-bound students and their parents, focusing on career planning, community colleges and help in the college planning process www.nacacnet.org/PublicationsResources/steps

ONLINE APPLICATIONS/THE COMMON APPLICATION

- The Common Application: www.commonapp.org
- Common Black College Application: www.eduinonline.com/eduweb/

FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

- Fastweb: www.fastweb.com
- FAFSA on the Web: www.fafsa.ed.gov – NOT www.fafsa.com
- Salliemae: www.collegeanswer.com/index.jsp
- Federally funded scholarships, internships, and cooperative programs: www.studentjobs.gov/e-scholar.asp
- Scholarships for Students of Hispanic descent: www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org/ and www.hsf.net/

SPECIAL INTEREST SITES

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities: HBCUConnect.com and www.hbcumentor.com/
- Black Excel: www.BlackExcel.org
- Hispanic Students: www.hnip.net
- Catholic Colleges Online: www.catholiccollegesonline.org
- Jesuit Colleges and Universities: www.ajcunet.edu
- Hillel Chapters: www.hillel.org
- Council for Christian Colleges & Universities: www.cccu.org
- NCAA Guide for the Student-Athletes: www.ncaa.org/wps/portal
- Gap year alternatives: www.timeoutassociates.com and www.interimprograms.com

MILITARY COLLEGES

- Army: www.goarmy.com
- Air Force: www.airforce.com
- Coast Guard: www.uscg.mil
- Marines: www.usmc.mil
- National Guard: <http://www.1800goguard.com/home.html>
- Navy: www.navyjobs.com
- Selective Service Registration: www.sss.gov Males ages 18-25 who live in the US *must* register

Tips for Parents During the College Process

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The college search and admission process is a life-changing event, and often for the whole family. The beginning of the college search signals the beginning of the transition from teenager to young adult. As a result, it can be difficult for parents to strike the right balance of helping without taking over. Here are some dos and don'ts for parents entering the world of college admission.

DO Learn About the Process

Even if you have vivid memories of your own college decisions, realize that the college admission process has changed since you attended. Whether or not you attended college, invest some time in reading up about today's college admission. There are many good books on this topic in your public library or bookstore, and high schools often sponsor workshops for parents on college admission topics. Or ask your college counselor to recommend helpful resources.

DO Discuss Restrictions Up Front

If there are financial or geographic restrictions, discuss them at the beginning of the college search. Your son/daughter should still consider all the colleges that seem right, but he/she will know on the front end what stipulations must be met.

DON'T Limit Choices Based on Cost

It's always a good idea include several affordable colleges among the college choices. But remember that financial aid often helps families send their children to even the most expensive colleges. No matter your income level, find out all you can about financial aid. Your guidance counselor or the colleges' financial aid offices can direct you to good resources and answer your questions about how financial aid works.

DO Remind Your Child of Deadlines

The life of a high school student is often very busy, and teenagers are still learning time management skills. So ask your son/daughter to begin keeping a calendar or day planner to keep track of all those college application deadlines (as well as school work and activities).

DON'T Nag

Remember, the goal is for your daughter/son to "own" the process, so that she/he can make appropriate college decisions. Agree on a time once a week for a "college update."

DO Listen and Offer Advice

For many students, their choice of college is their first adult decision—and it can be difficult. Likewise, it can be difficult for parents to find the right balance of guiding their student without making decisions for him/her. Try to act as a sounding board: ask good questions and let your son/daughter supply the answers.

DON'T Make Decisions for Your Student

Your student needs to choose a college based on his/her individual abilities, interests and personality. Do not pressure your student to apply to colleges you would choose for them. It may be fun to imagine yourself in college again...but it is not your choice (although you do have the final say about cost - they must be affordable, of course). Encourage your daughter/son to apply to a good range of schools, but she/he must decide which colleges to apply to and which college to attend.

DON'T Use College Funds for a Car

A college fund should be a college fund. Telling a teenager that they can buy a car with the college fund if they choose a less expensive college will undermine the selection process. Who wouldn't rather have a car than make a tough choice? Let your son/daughter decide which college is best for him/her and then talk about how to make it affordable and what to do with any funds that remain.

DO Be a Cheerleader

The college admission process can be stressful. Your son/daughter is likely to feel uncertain about the decisions she/he must make, fearful of rejection from colleges, or anxious about meeting deadlines for both college applications and his/her school work. Over the course of the search process, students change their minds (more than once) about career aspirations, academic goals, or what they want in a college. All of this is normal. Parents can help their college-bound student by offering plenty of encouragement, a listening ear, and gentle guidance. **And don't forget to celebrate each step along the journey from high school to college.**

Last Words

Have fun.

Enjoy getting to know your son/daughter better.

Cherish these moments – even the difficult ones.

There are many perfect colleges for your son/daughter... not just one.

Name recognition is not all it's cracked up to be. Many wonderful colleges are not well known beyond their geographic region. Many well-known colleges are not the right choice for your son/daughter.

“College is a match to be made not a prize to be won”

Frank Sachs, Director of College Counseling, The Blake School, Minneapolis, Minnesota

This list was based upon the article by Jennifer Gross on the NACAC web site *Steps To College*

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