

# Timeline

Encourage your child to follow this basic college timeline. For additional information and advice, talk to your child's counselor.

## 9th Grade

- ▶ Work hard to get good grades. Your freshman grades will be on your transcript—and they'll also be used to figure your GPA.
- ▶ Get involved in school and community activities.

## 10th Grade

- ▶ Take college prep courses.
- ▶ Consider taking a college practice test (e.g., PSAT) if one is offered at your school.
- ▶ Develop your skills and talents.

## 11th Grade

- ▶ Research your college options.
- ▶ Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October.
- ▶ Take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring.
- ▶ Meet with your counselor to discuss college plans.
- ▶ Make college visits in the spring and summer.

## 12th Grade

- ▶ Take the ACT and/or SAT in the fall, if necessary.
- ▶ Complete college applications.
- ▶ If you need help paying for college, complete a FAFSA. [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov)
- ▶ In the spring, consider your offers and make a decision.

# Paying for College

Many families aren't able to save enough money to pay for college. For students who qualify, financial aid is available.

Financial aid comes in the following forms:

- ▶ **Grant** – money given, usually because of financial need
- ▶ **Scholarship** – money awarded for academic achievement or outstanding talent
- ▶ **Work Study** – money earned by working at a part-time job provided by the college
- ▶ **Loan** – money that must be repaid

There are many ways to make college affordable. If you need help paying for college, talk to your child's counselor or to a college financial aid officer. They can explain your financial aid options and discuss ways to cut college costs.

For additional information, go to  
[collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org)  
[act.org](http://act.org)  
[studentaid.ed.gov](http://studentaid.ed.gov)

*Education is an investment in the future!*



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## Parent InfoGuide

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PARENT

# HELP YOUR CHILD Prepare for College



Parent InfoGuide





# Help Your Child Prepare for College

**As a parent, it's important that you take an active interest in your child's planning and preparation for college.**

## Academic Preparation

**Encourage your child to take college prep courses in high school—and to work hard to get the best grades possible.**

**Most four-year colleges recommend that students take the following courses while in high school:**

- ▶ 4 years of English
- ▶ 3-4 years of math
- ▶ 3 years of science
- ▶ 2-3 years of the same foreign language
- ▶ 3 years of social studies
- ▶ 1 year of fine or performing arts

## Choosing the Right College

**When choosing a college, consider the following:**

### Type of College

- ▶ 2-year colleges offer affordable one and two-year career programs. Students can also start at a community college and transfer to a 4-year college.
- ▶ 4-year colleges offer more courses and more extracurricular activities. A 4-year college degree can also provide a greater number of career opportunities.

**Size** – College sizes vary from a few hundred students to 20,000+. Large colleges can offer more programs and majors; small colleges are more personal.

**Location** – Is your child looking for a college close to home? In your home state? In a big city?

**Academic Programs** – All colleges offer a variety of majors; however, if your child wants to study something specific, you must find a college that offers that major.

**Cost** – College costs vary greatly. When calculating college costs, include tuition, fees, room and board, books, and personal expenses.

**Admissions Requirements** – Some colleges accept all high school graduates. Others are very selective. Look for colleges that accept students with academic records similar to your child's.

## Admissions Criteria

**Colleges use some, if not all, of the information listed below when determining whether or not to accept an applicant.**

### GPA (Grade Point Average) / Class Rank

Colleges consider a student's GPA in college prep courses to be the most important admissions criteria. Colleges know that students who do well in high school are more likely to succeed in college.

### Strength of Subjects

College admission officers examine high school transcripts carefully to see if students have taken the recommended college prep courses. They also look for honors and Advanced Placement courses.

### Test Scores

Most 4-year colleges require that applicants submit ACT or SAT scores. The more selective the school, the more important these test scores are.

### Extracurricular Activities

Colleges are most interested in seeing meaningful involvement, commitment, and evidence of leadership. Quality is more important than quantity.

### Recommendations

Colleges often ask for letters of recommendation from counselors and teachers.