

Tips For Parents

What Parents Can Do to Help Their Senior Daughters

September – December

- Create an organized, quiet space where your daughter may routinely work on her college applications—help her stay organized and motivated;
- If possible, continue to visit colleges especially those that have already invited your daughter to enroll. Colleges organize special visit days that usually are well worth the time and expense.
- Encourage your daughter to rank her choices. Know which is her first choice, her second, her third, etc. and why! Attempt to bring your wishes and her wishes into alignment;
- Double check her college list—which is her safety? Which is her reach? If she has dropped any schools or added any ask why. Learn from the answer.
- Have a thorough understanding of your daughter's deadlines and of the rules surrounding her applications such as early decision.
- Be sensitive to the intricacies of all the paper work and thus to the stress your daughter is experiencing;
- Help motivate her to complete all scholarship applications;
- Print, keep, and organize all confirmation communications from colleges re applications received. File hard copies of everything;
- Don't forget EXAMS! Remember, colleges receive and evaluate first semester transcripts, so first semester exams are her last shot at influencing her GPA;
- Speaking of the GPA. Most colleges have their own internal system for weighting course selections and calculating GPA. Their system may not match the system used at your daughter's school. Be prepared.

- As a family, continue developing a solid understanding of your bottom line, yearly \$\$ contribution for college expenses, including travel, spending money, house fees, and all other seemingly peripheral costs. It's critical to your daughter's search and to her future satisfaction that you have a clear understanding of the financial perimeters and that you communicate that with your daughter before acceptances and financial aid packages arrive.
- Parents should contact a school's financial aid office. Getting to know your daughter's financial aid staff early is a very good idea no matter what.
- Fill-out the FAFSA worksheet and begin thinking through the FAFSA form. Get your financial information together. You must be on time when filing the official form in January;

January – June

- Complete and submit the FAFSA and CSS Profile; Once you receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) quickly make any necessary corrections and submit them to the FAFSA processor;
- Discuss how you and your daughter will handle both good news and bad should it arrive. Be prepared to celebrate and/or be prepared to cope;
- Once she have received notification from all colleges, review your daughter's choices and compare financial aid packages; Contact a school's financial aid office if you have questions about the aid that a school has offered you;
- When your daughter decides on her college, notify that school of her commitment, submit the required deposit and complete housing and roommate information.

What Parents Should Avoid Once the Applications Have Been Sent

- Avoid the itch to send one more letter of recommendation. Dissuade friends, family, acquaintances from placing calls/sending emails on her behalf. It remains important that she follow each application's specific guidelines—more is not better; more is irritating to admissions committees!

- Resist the temptation to call admissions representatives on a daily or weekly basis to inquire about her candidacy. Fact: if you are annoying, your daughter will not be accepted;
 - Refrain from second guessing the paper work she has already submitted. In other words, if she felt good about her application the day she submitted it, then continue to feel good about it today.
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Parent's College Admissions Pledge

I am resigned to the fact that my child's college search will end in disaster. I am serene. Deadlines will be missed and scholarships will be lost as my child lounges under pulsating headphones or stares transfixed at a Game Cube. I am a parent and I know nothing. I am serene.

Confronted with endless procrastination, my impulse is to take control - to register for tests, plan visits, schedule interviews, and get applications. It was I who asked those four follow-up questions at College Night - I couldn't help myself. And yet I know that everything will be fine if I can summon the fortitude to relax. My child is smart, capable, and perhaps a little too accustomed to me jumping in and fixing things. I will hold back. I will drop hints and encourage, then back off. I will facilitate rather than dominate. The college search won't happen on my schedule, but it will happen.

I will not get too high or low about any facet of the college search. By doing so, I give it more importance than it really has. My child's self-worth may already be too wrapped up in getting an acceptance letter. I will attempt to lessen the fear rather than heighten it.

I will try not to say "no" simply because my son or daughter says "yes," and remain open to the possibility, however improbable, that my child has the most important things under control. I understand that my anxiety comes partly from a sense of impending loss. I can feel my child slipping away. Sometimes I hold on too tightly or let social acceptability cloud the issue of what is best.

I realize that my child is almost ready to go and that a little rebellion at this time of life can be a good thing. I will respect and encourage independence, even if some of it is expressed as resentment toward me. I will make suggestions with

care and try to avoid unnecessary confrontation.

Paying for college is my responsibility. I will take a major role in the search for financial aid and scholarships and speak honestly to my child about the financial realities we face.

I must help my daughter take charge of the college search. I will try to support without smothering, encourage without annoying, and consult without controlling. The college search is too big to be handled alone - I will be there every step of the way.