

Preparing for College *the* Parent Path – taken from Augusta College

Freshman Year

Discuss the importance of lifelong learning and the value of a good college education.

Create time and space for your student to establish good study habits.

Promote extended, well-paced study rather than short-term cramming.

Discuss the impact of high school grades and course selection on college admission.

Check curriculum requirements for college entrance.

Encourage involvement in extra-curricular activities, volunteering and Internships or other work experiences.

Talk with friends and family members enrolled in college about their own experiences.

Plan for college expenses and explore your savings options.

Sophomore Year

Get to know and network with your son's or daughter's teachers and counselors.

Talk about his or her interests and career possibilities.

Search the web to find examples of your student's ideal college, and check websites for more information.

Discuss which factors are most important to your student when choosing a college, such as size, location, majors and related programs, special academic opportunities or athletics.

Continue your support of extra-curricular involvement and leadership roles.

Find out whether your student should take the PLAN (pre-ACT) or the PSAT exam.

Create a system for organizing college correspondence.

Junior Year

Your son or daughter should develop and follow a plan for the college search process.

Attend information sessions and college nights sponsored by the high school.

Consult with your student's high school counselor for college search ideas and advice.

Review all options ... if a school seems too costly, find out what scholarships and other financial assistance may be available to you.

Support your student as he or she prepares for and takes the ACT/SAT exams.

Find out if your student should take the [Advanced Placement or SAT II exams](#).

Begin general visits to a variety of schools.

Network with other parents for information and support, and consider taking turns bringing students and friends to a variety of colleges for visits.

Summer before Senior Year

Help your son or daughter sort through college mail as it arrives.

Review ACT/SAT results and discuss whether your student should re-test.

Encourage your student to look at online applications and begin thinking about essay responses.

Visit a wide variety of schools, from large public universities to independent liberal arts colleges, and choose a wide variety of types of visits—from open houses to special summer programs.

Check to make sure your student is taking a course load that will prepare him or her for success in the first year of college.

[Develop a list of questions for colleges and take it with you on your visits](#).

Senior Year

Send in applications and stay on top of deadlines.

Keep visiting colleges, and encourage your student to spend the night and attend classes at the schools that spark interest.

Schedule interviews on campus (as required).

Remain open-minded as the short list develops.

Meet deadlines when applying for merit-based scholarships and need-based assistance (for example, Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA).

Collect all of your tax information and file for financial assistance on time (and keep copies).

Remain helpful and supportive while the final college choice is made.

Notify the chosen school and send in the tuition deposit. It's also courteous to notify all other schools that granted acceptance of your final decision.

Take a deep breath and relax! You and your college-bound student will encounter new decisions and create new checklists during the summer ahead.