

Steps to College

Lower Elementary School

Parents, did you know that numerous studies identify you as the single most important factor in your child's decision to go on to college? Regardless of whether or not you attended college, your consistent and unwavering reinforcement of the importance of graduating from high school and earning a high quality degree (i.e. license, certificate, associate's or bachelor's) is the greatest factor in a child's decision-making process. You can help with college access and success in the following ways:

Parent To-Do List

To Do:

-  Help your child develop and maintain an interest in reading by reading aloud to him or her.
-  Check your child's homework regularly and follow his or her progress in school by looking at report cards and attending parent-teacher conferences.
-  Start saving for your child's college education.

To Explore:

-  "Saving Early = Saving Smart!" at www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov. This handout explains why it's never too early to save money for college and how to use such resources as college savings plans and federal student aid.
-  "Helping Your Child Become a Reader" at <http://www.ed.gov/parents> (click on "Helping Your Child"). This article explains how to create a foundation for learning for children up to age 6. It includes activities that make learning experiences out of daily routines and provides a list of resources for parents.

Have Fun:

-  Do "What do you want to be when you grow up?" activities.
 - Question and actively listen to your child about his or her future. Ask your child what he or she likes to do, who he or she admires and what that person does for a living.
 - Have your child cut pictures from magazines of people in different occupations.
 - Ask your child questions about each picture—what the person is doing, what kind of job that person has, what makes that job important.
 - Ask your child to select a picture that he or she likes best and have him or her tell you why it is of interest and create a story about the person, from before the picture was taken to after the picture was taken. Ask your child if he or she would like to do what that person is doing when he or she grows up.
-  Read books about role models to whom your child can relate. Discuss the career paths of the role models and the educational steps they took to reach their goals.
-  Take your child to a college event and talk about aspects of the college that might appeal to him or her, tying his or her interests and hobbies to specific locations on campus, such as the student life center, football stadium, arts center, academic departments, etc.

Student To-Do List

To Do:

-  Do your best in school.
-  Read a lot and tell your parents about what you're reading.
-  Complete homework assignments and turn them in on time.
-  Have fun learning.

To Explore:

-  Job descriptions and games at www.kids.gov.