

Steps to College

Upper 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:

- 👤 Encourage your child to work hard and get the best grades he or she can.
- 👤 Find people to support your child, such as school counselors, mentors, coaches, family members, etc.
- 👤 Familiarize your child with the definitions of "college" and "post-secondary education" because there is a difference. Know that not every child wants to go on to a four-year institution (i.e. college), but every child has many options within the realm of post-secondary education (e.g. license, certificate, associate's degree or bachelor's degree) that suits his or her interests, skills and extracurricular activities.
- 👤 Help your child understand why an education beyond high school is personally and economically important.

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.
- 👤 College events at a local college or university. Talk about aspects of the college that might appeal to your child, 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.
- 👤 Scavenger hunt (real or virtual) of a school of your child's choosing. Locate places or items, such as the field house, fitness center, dorm, student life center, admissions office, academic department, etc. Talk about each location and its importance to campus life.

Have Fun Discussing:

- 👤 What do you want to be when you grow up? What do you think you will have to study after high school to do those jobs?
- 👤 What do you think of when you hear the words "college" or "post-secondary education"?
- 👤 What do you think college is for? Why do students continue on to an education beyond high school?
- 👤 Who do you know who goes to or has gone to college or a post-secondary institution? Where did they go?
- 👤 What colleges or post-secondary institutions do you know about? How do you know about them? Where or from who have you heard about them?
- 👤 What other things can you do in college or other post-secondary institution besides study and take classes?

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:

- 👤 Games and puzzles at www.kids.gov.