

Checklist for Parents of High Schoolers



Sophomore Year of High School

Start Visiting Colleges

Even if your student isn't sure of major or career goal, visits to a variety of campuses will help him or her focus on the type of college that is most desirable.



Incorporate campus visits with other trips to see campuses further from home.

Explore College Costs

Understand the net price, as opposed to sticker price, of different colleges.



Search for the college name and "net price calculator" in your internet browser.



Prepare for Standardized Tests

Both the ACT and SAT offer free practice tests online, and more robust preparation is available on those sites and from other test providers for a fee.



Sophomores may take the PSAT10 to get a baseline score for the PSAT given to juniors.

Explore Career Options

Explore career options with tools like our ROCI Reality Check, which can help students get an idea of options and salaries.



Help your child understand how salary is connected to the cost to earn a degree.

Encourage Reading and Awareness of World Events

These activities broaden perspective and can ignite a passion in your student.



News podcasts are often appealing to high school students and you can listen together during daily commutes.



Help Your Child Be Involved

Many colleges also consider involvement and leadership during the application process.



Encourage your child to become more deeply involved in the activities he or she likes the most.

Plan High School Coursework

Help your student work with school counselors to ensure graduation and college admissions requirements will be met within the next two years.



Many high schools offer opportunities for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or dual enrollment classes that may allow your student to earn college credit.



Junior Year of High School

Understand the Financial Aid Process

It's wise to understand how grants, scholarships, work-study and loans work together to cover college costs.



Help your student understand what your family may contribute to college costs.

Take Standardized Tests

Plan for your students to take either the ACT or SAT more than once as many colleges "superscore," or accept the best subscores from multiple sittings.



Some students perform better on the ACT, while others score higher on the SAT. Colleges accept either test, so decide whether to take only one or both tests.

Get Serious About the College Search

School websites can provide valuable information about cost, the student body, and academics. College fairs and targeted visits can also help your child narrow down the list.



Try a couple of each type of visits (scheduled visit days or individual visits).

Explore Scholarship Opportunities

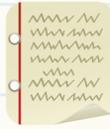
Help your student search for and learn about scholarship opportunities. Knowing the requirements will help your student prepare to be in the running.



Many colleges apply merit aid, or scholarships awarded on academic merit, to reduce awarded financial aid, allowing your student to take out fewer loans.

Encourage Writing

Essays, personal statements and short-answer responses are integral to the college application process.



An English teacher may be willing to work with your student to perfect writing.

Compile a Resume

Help your student think about activities, awards, accomplishments, academics, work and community efforts from the beginning of high school.



Show your student how professionals use action words, short phrases and descriptions of results to create their resumes.



www.IowaStudentLoan.org
www.IowaStudentLoan.org/Blog