

How to Help: College Checklist

IT'S A PLAN

Parents, other family members, and mentors all play an important role in helping students get ready for college. The most important thing is to talk to them regularly about school and their future goals. Here's how else you can support them:

ACHIEVE

Help them do their best in school.

Academics are the most important factor in getting into and graduating from college. Encourage your student to build good habits now that will help them be successful.

- Be vocal about your expectations for school. Ask questions about your student's classes, teachers, and assignments.
- Help them find a system that works for them to keep track of class material, assignments, and deadlines.
- Make sure your student goes to class and turns in all assignments.
- Talk to teachers and other school staff about your student's progress.

Take the right classes.

Talk to school staff to make sure your student has the classes they need to graduate from and apply to college.

- Review your student's classes to make sure they are taking a full schedule.
- Encourage your student to take challenging classes, including those that may offer college credit.

Support them in preparing for college admission tests.

Some colleges require or accept admissions tests like the ACT or SAT.

- JUNIORS/SENIORS:** Encourage them to take practice tests before signing up and taking the SAT or ACT if they need to.

ENGAGE

Encourage them to be involved.

Extracurricular activities give your student the chance to explore their interests and make friends. Colleges like to see how students are involved.

- Encourage your student to participate in school and community activities during the school year and summer.

Help them spend time with good people.

Who your student hangs out with matters. Ensure they have a support system of people who want to see them succeed.

- Get to know your student's friends and their parents. Encourage them to choose friends that share positive goals and interests.
- Help your student find a mentor – a teacher, counselor, coach, other trusted adult or older student that they can talk to.
- Encourage your student to be a role model for younger students.

Guide them to make good choices.

Help your student understand healthy, safe, and kind behaviors.

- Help them take care of their physical and mental health. Encourage them to exercise, eat healthy and get enough sleep.
- Remind them to be safe online.
- Share your expectations and the risks of drinking, doing drugs, and having sex.
- Model being kind and treating others with respect.



EXPLORE

Explore college and career options with your student.

Encourage them to keep their options open as their goals, interests, and preferences change.

- Talk to them about careers they are interested in and the education they will need.
- Get to know the different types of colleges. Take a virtual tour, or if possible, visit a college campus with your student.
- Help them think about what is most important to them in a college. Ask them to share their list of colleges that meet these needs.

Learn about paying for college.

Your student can afford college. Learn about the costs and how to pay for college.

- Explore what college costs. Estimate what your student might pay using a net price calculator.
- Learn about financial aid and other ways to pay for college.
- Set up and regularly contribute to a college savings account.
- Encourage your student to make a list of scholarships and apply to any available now.

Help your student get organized and get help.

Knowing how to get to college can be confusing. There are people and programs who want to help your student reach their goals.

- Have your student use Oregon Goes To College's templates and resources to help them stay organized.
- Help your student create a file of important documents and a list of activities that they participate in.
- You and your student can connect with a counselor, teacher, mentor or program in your school or community.
- Encourage them to create and use a professional e-mail for all college-related activities,

MAKE THEIR PLAN

Encourage your student to apply to college.

Let them lead the process, but help keep track of deadlines.

- Ask them to share their final list of 4–6 colleges that will be a good fit for them.
- Encourage them to be prepared with the information they need.
- Congratulate your student on taking the first step and applying to college!

Pay for college.

There is financial aid available to help your student pay for college.

- Ask them which financial aid applications they will need to complete and what information they need from you. Encourage them to apply as early as possible.
- Encourage them to set aside time each week to apply for scholarships.
- Compare their financial aid offers carefully.

Go to college.

Help your student make their decision and get ready to go.

- Help them think carefully and critically in deciding where to go to college.
- Support them in filling out forms like financial aid, orientation, and registering for classes.
- Encourage them to start practicing what it takes to be a successful college student.
- Learn where they can get help on campus.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Preparing for college

- oregongoestocollege.org
- bigfuture.collegeboard.org
- collegescorecard.ed.gov

Paying for college

- oregonstudentaid.gov
- studentaid.gov

