



Prepping Parents

A counselor guide for
talking to parents and
guardians of juniors and
seniors about college



Helping families get ready for college, one month at a time.

College planning can be stressful and overwhelming for families. To help, we've created a calendar with suggested topics and activities for parents and guardians to focus on each month. Use the resources and shareable messages on your school website, social media, and newsletters to help keep them informed and focused on their student's path to college.



August

	TOPICS	USE THESE RESOURCES	SHARE THESE MESSAGES
11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Make a College Wish List</h2> <p>Deciding where to go is a process. A good starting point is for parents to help their teen create a wish list of colleges based on qualities they're looking for in a school.</p>	<h3>"Quick Guide: Starting Your College Search"</h3> <p>This article highlights all the steps students and their parents can take to begin their college search.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A great way to start junior year is to start making a college wish list. Get more college planning advice at cb.org/parents What type of college is right for your teen? Learn the basics about all the types here: https://goo.gl/Z2dn3P There are thousands of colleges. Which ones should your teen apply to? Start your college search here: https://goo.gl/XoHDhH
		<h3>College Search Step-by-Step</h3> <p>This tool helps families learn about key college search categories and discover what's most important to them.</p>	
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Find Out the Net Price</h2> <p>As students begin to narrow their college lists, parents can research the net price of each college their teen is considering to determine their actual cost based on financial aid and other factors.</p>	<h3>"Nine Things You Need to Know About Net Price"</h3> <p>This slide show quickly explains what a college's net price is and why it matters when choosing a school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think a college on your teen's list is too expensive? It might not be. Know the myths about paying for college: https://goo.gl/yRvMBj Most students pay less than their college's sticker price. Learn all about net price at https://goo.gl/jMWtbe What will college cost? Probably less than you think. Learn the real cost with College Board's Net Price Calculator: https://goo.gl/oau127
		<h3>Net Price Calculator</h3> <p>This tool helps students estimate the net price for hundreds of colleges.</p>	

September

	TOPICS	USE THESE RESOURCES	SHARE THESE MESSAGES
11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Get Ready to Take the PSAT/NMSQT</h2> <p>Let parents know why the PSAT/NMSQT is so important and how they can help their teen prepare for it.</p>	<h3>Scholarship Partners and Programs</h3> <p>This webpage explains how taking the PSAT/NMSQT connects students to scholarship providers across the country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will your student get after taking the PSAT/NMSQT? Access to \$160M in scholarships and so much more. https://goo.gl/gswtKK The PSAT/NMSQT is so much more than just another test. See everything it offers your teen: https://goo.gl/E3TyEQ The PSAT/NMSQT is coming soon. Learn how you can help your teen practice for it: https://goo.gl/iQDTH7
		<h3>Parents Guide to Official SAT Practice</h3> <p>This resource for parents explains how Official SAT Practice can help their children prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT and the SAT.</p>	
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Check in and Create a Calendar</h2> <p>Encourage parents to check in with the school counselor and make a college planning calendar to stay on top of all the deadlines, milestones, and important dates.</p>	<h3>Applying to College: Your Counselor's Role</h3> <p>This article helps parents see how to best engage with you during the college application process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your teen a senior? Check in with a counselor this month to make sure they are on track for college. College Planning Tip: Make a calendar to keep track of application deadlines and important dates. Get more advice at cb.org/parents Senior year is filled with college planning activities. Make a plan and stay on top of them all: https://goo.gl/aR4zR
		<h3>Make a Plan</h3> <p>This tool helps students and their parents organize all their college planning activities for the year.</p>	

October

	TOPICS	USE THESE RESOURCES	SHARE THESE MESSAGES
11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Know All the Financial Aid Options</h2> <p>Make sure parents know about all the options available to help pay for college, including grants and scholarships, loans, and work-study programs.</p>	<h3>7 Things You Need to Know About Financial Aid</h3> <p>This slide show offers a quick introduction to the types of financial aid that are available, where to start, and how to apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAFSA? Work study? Grants? Scholarships? Get answers to FAQs about financial aid: https://goo.gl/QEd8XK How do you begin the financial aid process? https://goo.gl/6FTrW8 There are many different college loan options. Find out what's your best option: https://goo.gl/11Kt1u
		<h3>Myths about Financial Aid</h3> <p>This short video featuring financial aid experts highlights some of the most common misconceptions about financial aid.</p>	
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Complete FAFSA and CSS Profile</h2> <p>Help parents understand what FAFSA and CSS Profile are and why completing them early during senior year gives their teen the best chance to get the most financial aid.</p>	<h3>Paying for College</h3> <p>This video webinar provides an overview of completing the FAFSA, applying for financial aid, and searching for scholarships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give your college-bound teen the best chance to get the most financial aid. Complete the FAFSA in early October at fafsa.gov Is the FAFSA hard to complete? https://goo.gl/ju5SaQ Find out what the CSS Profile is and how it can help you pay for college at https://goo.gl/xD7GS2
		<h3>How to Complete the CSS Profile</h3> <p>This article explains what Profile is, who must submit it, how much it costs, and the process for completing it.</p>	

November

	TOPICS	USE THESE RESOURCES	SHARE THESE MESSAGES
11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Search for Scholarships Big and Small</h2> <p>Remind parents to look for local and regional scholarships opportunities as well as national ones. Direct them to search the Scholarship Search tool on BigFuture and other search resources.</p>	<h3>Where to Find College Scholarships</h3> <p>This article outlines the different college scholarships that are available and where to look for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wondering if your teen might be able to qualify for a college scholarship? Learn some of the typical requirements: https://goo.gl/RE9SEG There are scholarships out there for just about every situation and interest. Don't limit your teen's search. https://goo.gl/LpRT5N Use this tool from College Board to search for scholarships from more than 2,200 programs: https://goo.gl/tSG498
		<h3>Scholarship Search</h3> <p>This tool lets parents search for scholarships, other financial aid, and internships from more than 2,200 programs, totaling nearly \$6 billion.</p>	
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Apply to At Least Six Schools</h2> <p>It's recommended that students apply to at least six colleges. Deadlines vary, but this is a good time to focus on it. Let parents know how they can help their teen finalize their college list and support them through the application process.</p>	<h3>The Anatomy of the College Application</h3> <p>This guide shows parents all the different elements of a typical college application, from the actual form to the interview.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many colleges should your teen apply to? College Board recommends at least six. Get more college planning advice at cb.org/parents Applying to colleges soon? Here are 5 things you need to know about college admission: https://goo.gl/UURc4H How can you help your teen apply to colleges? Use this checklist to keep track of tasks and deadlines: https://goo.gl/cdzxbU
		<h3>College Application Checklist</h3> <p>This printable checklist can help parents keep track of their child's application requirements, tasks, and deadlines.</p>	

December

	TOPICS	USE THESE RESOURCES	SHARE THESE MESSAGES
11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Get a Free SAT Study Plan</h2> <p>Remind parents to review their teen's PSAT/NMSQT score report this month to see where they can improve, find AP courses, and get a free SAT study plan on Khan Academy based on their scores.</p>	<h3>Getting PSAT/NMSQT Scores</h3> <p>This webpage outlines everything parents need to do to access their student's PSAT/NMSQT score.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your teen's PSAT/NMSQT results are out this month. Here's everything you need to know to access them: https://goo.gl/UCmCe9 Did you get your teen's PSAT/NMSQT score results? Here's a video showing you what they mean: https://goo.gl/68ZftX Your teen's PSAT/NMSQT score unlocks a personalized SAT practice on Khan Academy and it's free! Get started at satpractice.org
		<h3>Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy</h3> <p>This free website is the only practice from makers of the test and offers students personalized practice based on their PSAT/NMSQT scores.</p>	
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Send Test Scores and Set Up College Interviews</h2> <p>To finalize their applications, students will need to send their SAT scores and some colleges may also require an interview. Encourage parents to help their teen finalize all of the final application elements.</p>	<h3>How to Send Scores</h3> <p>This webpage shows parents all the steps their teen will need to take to send their SAT scores to colleges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Score Choice and how it can help your teen send colleges their best SAT score? Watch this short video: https://goo.gl/VE9xoQ What is a college looking for during the interview? Hear what one Dean of Admissions has to say: https://goo.gl/b2Nb6F Helping your teen prepare for their college interviews? Use this checklist: https://goo.gl/5Ti7FT
		<h3>College Interviews: Practice Questions and Strategies</h3> <p>This slide show helps parents understand the role of the interview in the college application process and provides tips for preparing their teen.</p>	

January

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11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Meet with a School Counselor</h2> <p>Encourage parents to meet with you to make a plan. Then, remind them to check in regularly over their teen’s final two years of high school to make sure they’re still on track.</p>	<h3>20 Questions to Ask Your School Counselor</h3> <p>This list of questions can help parents see the types of things to ask you to have a productive meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your teen a junior? January is a great month to meet with your school counselor and make a plan for college. What are some good questions to ask your teen’s school counselor about college? Check out this list: https://goo.gl/2TEGxy Help your junior stay on top of their college deadlines with this tool from the College Board: https://goo.gl/aR4zR
		<h3>Make a Plan</h3> <p>This tool helps students and their parents organize all their college planning activities for the next two years.</p>	
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Review Acceptance Letters and Awards Together</h2> <p>Many people are now starting to hear back from colleges. Encourage students and parents to wait to review all acceptance letters and financial aid awards together before making a decision.</p>	<h3>“You Got Accepted — Now What?”</h3> <p>This article outlines everything students and parents need to know to make their final college decision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did your teen get accepted to a college? Wondering what to do next? Go here: https://goo.gl/Vmva8m Got an acceptance letter? Find out what to do with the next one: the financial aid award letter. Go here: https://goo.gl/aNbQ81 Deciding between colleges? Compare the costs with this tool from the College Board: https://goo.gl/xHyg7w
		<h3>Compare Aid Awards Calculator</h3> <p>This tool lets parents compare the financial costs and aid awards for up to four schools to help them make a more informed college decision.</p>	

February

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11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Register and Prepare for the SAT</h2> <p>The best time to take the SAT is during spring of junior year. Encourage parents to help their students sign up for Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy and register for an SAT test date in the spring.</p>	<h3>"Which Admission Tests Do I Need to Take?"</h3> <p>This article highlights the key differences between the SAT and ACT, and when to take them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When should students take the SAT? Spring of junior year to leave time to re-take if they want to improve. Get more tips at cb.org/parents Worrying about paying for the SAT? Your teen might qualify for a fee waiver. Find out here: https://goo.gl/5jWjrL Helping your teen get ready for the SAT? Check out Official SAT Practice. It's free. Learn more at satpractice.org
		<h3>Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy</h3> <p>This free website is the only practice from the makers of the SAT and offers students personalized practice based on their PSAT/NMSQT scores.</p>	
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Make a College Decision</h2> <p>If they haven't already, many students will soon be making their final decisions. Let parents know how they can help their teen evaluate admissions offers for the best academic, social, and financial fit.</p>	<h3>"Helping Your Child Make a College Decision"</h3> <p>This webinar highlights all the things parents can do to support their teen during the college decision making process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did your teen get accepted to more than one college? Get advice about making a decision at https://goo.gl/ThjzaF May 1 is when most colleges expect a final decision, but don't wait until then. Start working towards one now at https://goo.gl/lAzQXz Deciding between colleges? See which one has more of your must-haves with this tool from the College Board: https://goo.gl/z5tdaa
		<h3>Compare Colleges</h3> <p>This tool lets parents compare colleges they're teen is considering based on criteria like location, campus size, and costs.</p>	

March

	TOPICS	USE THESE RESOURCES	SHARE THESE MESSAGES
11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Search for Colleges</h2> <p>Once students and parents have a better idea of what they're looking for, they can begin formalizing their list by exploring schools on BigFuture based on things like interests, test scores, and costs.</p>	<p>How to Find a College That Fits You</p> <p>This article outlines the steps students can take to find colleges where they will thrive.</p> <hr/> <p>College Search</p> <p>This tool lets parents search more than 3,700 schools to find the ones that are right for their teen based on criteria like majors, interests, and costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents of Juniors: It's college list time. Use this search tool to help you create your list: https://goo.gl/kecp2t How can you help your teen create a college list? Here are 5 Steps: https://goo.gl/qb3tp5 "There's no such thing as the one perfect college." Making a college list? Make sure to keep an open mind: https://goo.gl/pkNMfi
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Make it Official</h2> <p>Once students have chosen a college, then it's time to dot the i's and cross the t's. Show parents how they can help finalize the paperwork and celebrate their teen's big decision.</p>	<p>You Made Your College Choice: What's Next?</p> <p>This checklist outlines everything parents and students will need to do to between making a college decision and arriving on campus.</p> <hr/> <p>Selecting a Financial Aid Package</p> <p>This article outlines all the things families need to consider when choosing a financial aid package.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your teen college-bound? Here's a checklist of things to do before they go: https://goo.gl/AFmzbv Did your teen get accepted to a college? See what you need to know about accepting a financial aid package: https://goo.gl/Y5uFpy Where is your teen going to college? Announce it on Instagram for a chance to win a scholarship from College Board at collegiance.org

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11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Visit a College Campus</h2> <p>This is a good time for parents and students to visit colleges they're interested in by touring campuses in-person or through virtual tours online.</p>	<h3>When to Visit</h3> <p>This article gives parents tips about the best times and seasons to schedule their campus visits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can't visit a campus in-person with your teen? Many colleges offer virtual tours online. Get more college planning advice at cb.org/parents What should you and your teen do on a college campus visit? Here are some helpful tips: https://goo.gl/DeqnWZ Visiting colleges with your teen? This campus visit checklist can help you make the most of your trip: https://goo.gl/i92C2m
		<h3>Campus Visit Checklist</h3> <p>This checklist outlines the best things to do and see when parents and students are visiting a college.</p>	
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Earn AP Credit</h2> <p>Students taking AP courses need to get ready for AP Exams in May. Make sure parents know how taking AP Exams can help save their teen time and money in college.</p>	<h3>How to Earn Credit for Your Scores</h3> <p>This webpage highlights what parents and students need to know about the AP exam and earning college credit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worried about the cost of taking an AP exam? See if your teen qualifies for a fee waiver: https://goo.gl/W5eJNs AP exams are next month. Use this College Search tool to see if your teen's college choice offers AP credit: https://goo.gl/UCZ9qK Is your teen taking any AP exams next month? They can now study for AP classes for free on Khan Academy: khanacademy.org
		<h3>Official AP Practice on Khan Academy</h3> <p>This free website is the only AP study resource from the creators of the AP Program and is a great way to refresh concepts learned earlier in the year to prepare for AP exams.</p>	

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11TH-GRADERS	<h2>Attend a College Fair</h2> <p>College fairs let students meet college representatives in person and get answers to any questions they have. Let parents know about any events happening in your area.</p>	<p>College Fair Checklist</p> <p>This checklist helps students prepare for college fairs so that they can get the most out of each one they attend.</p> <hr/> <p>Virtual College Tour</p> <p>This slideshow talks about ways to explore colleges online, for parents and students who may be unable to visit a campus or meet with a representative in person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking for local college fairs? Check out our school district's website for upcoming college events in our area. What can your teen expect to get out of a college fair? Watch this short video: https://goo.gl/Hd8GmU Is a college on your teen's list not part of our local college fair? Here are some strategies for exploring colleges online: https://goo.gl/axWmmq
12TH-GRADERS	<h2>Get Ready for the First Year of College</h2> <p>Your students are headed to college. Make sure they get off on the right foot. Help parents and students plan for what comes next, from choosing housing to attending orientation.</p>	<p>Off-to-College Checklist</p> <p>This checklist gives parents and students an idea of all the things they'll need to do between graduation and freshman year of college.</p> <hr/> <p>What to Expect from Campus Life</p> <p>This article highlights some of the opportunities and challenges students face when they leave home for the first time to go to college.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your teen going off to college soon? Here's a checklist to help you prepare for freshman year: https://goo.gl/Y8MGkM Is your college-bound teen excited and a little worried about the next step? This can help them know what to expect: https://goo.gl/aBPfUp Is your soon-to-be college student wondering what classes will be like? Here's how real college students describe them: https://goo.gl/pCvWDp