

6 WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP STUDENTS WITH THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

Parents should provide guidance and support but also let their teens lead the way.

Every admissions officer has a story about the overbearing parent who takes 100 percent control of the college application process. Parents' appropriate role is to offer guidance, support and empathy during a complicated, emotionally taxing, and in some cases disappointing, process.

The following is an article written by Lynn F. Jacobs and Jeremy S. Hyman and it is about their experience with their son's college search and they share their six best tips.

1. Work with your child to set a timetable: This is a good place to take the lead, especially if your son or daughter is prone to procrastination or doesn't want to think about college yet. At the beginning of junior year, sit down together and plan a schedule. Things to calendar: making the initial list, visiting the colleges, taking the SAT or ACT, and writing the applications.

2. Offer guidance in developing a preliminary list: With thousands of choices, many students have no idea where to start. Help your child frame his preferences: big vs. small, near home or far away, city or rural.

Once he has settled on a couple of choices, encourage him to locate colleges with similar characteristics using resources such as the search tools at usnews.com, the "choose a college" function at collegeresults.org and college websites. Discuss pruning any schools you can't afford to avoid disappointment later.

3. Help your child to find her "differentiator": The holistic review used by many colleges rewards not only good grades and test scores but also accomplishments and activities that set a student apart. Brainstorm to locate your child's focal interest – preferably one showing her initiative and sustained commitment – and then help her find ways to develop it.

If she is interested in game design, you might point her to a summer internship with a game design company, a college course in graphic design or artificial intelligence, and a game design competition.

4. Don't commandeer the college trips: Encourage your child to take the initiative in setting up the information session, campus tour, lunch with a student and, most important, visit to a class. Participate in the group activities, but let your child handle the class and interactions with students on her own. Be a sounding board.

5. Be a calming influence: The college search is a multiyear process, with moments of high stress and self-doubt. Kids are not used to this. Be empathetic and encourage your child to take things one step at a time.

6. Let your child "own" the decision: Remember, it's his life, not yours

Note from EducationUSA West Bank Center: In reference to #4: For many international students, scheduling college trips may not be possible or practical. However, most university and college websites provide virtual tours that provides students and parents an opportunity to virtually tour campus grounds, dormitories, sports facilities, classrooms, laboratories and other facilities.

Source: <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2016-09-13/6-ways-parents-can-help-students-with-the-college-application-process>