



January 2024

Seniors — Fill out the FAFSA if applying for financial aid.
Search and apply for scholarships.
File any additional college applications.
Have mid-year grades sent to colleges.
Avoid senioritis!

Juniors — Check College Board and ACT websites for available test dates and sites in your area.
Map out dates and create a test plan for spring SAT or ACT exams.
Look at [Fairtest](#) to learn about test optional or test blind colleges.

February 2024

Seniors — Make sure your college applications are complete.
Read the entire email from colleges and respond if necessary.
Update colleges with any new information that might influence admission.

Juniors — Begin researching colleges by using websites.
Attend virtual tours and information sessions.
Plan college visits over spring break.

Helping Your Child Succeed

In the midst of worrying about college admissions, it can be easy to forget that your child's high school years aren't just about getting into college. High school is also an important time for developing the life skills necessary to do well in college and into adulthood. Here are five ways parents can help their high schoolers prepare for success in college.

Help your child choose the appropriate level of academic challenge. High school academics lay the foundation for academic success in college. However, this doesn't mean that piling on a full slate of AP courses is right for every teen. Encourage your child to make thoughtful course selections, taking into account both individual strengths and weaknesses, and a reasonable work-life balance. Also discuss how high school coursework aligns with what your student will be studying in college. For instance, strong quantitative skills are a requirement to do well in many college courses; taking math through senior year in high school can help make the transition to those courses go more smoothly.

Cut the reins. It's nice to be needed, but as your child nears the end of high school, your goal as a parent should be to be needed *less*. Gradually give your child more freedom to make her own decisions and manage their own schedule: for instance, making and attending a doctor's appointment alone, picking up a prescription from the pharmacy or dealing with a difficult coach. Sure, it's likely that your child will make a few mistakes along the way, but it will be better to make those mistakes — and learn how to fix them — before going to college.

Make reading a family affair. Remember reading story-books to your young child? That activity likely helped your child learn to read. Even with teens, reading together

as a family is just as important. Few teens, of course, want to be tucked into bed with a story, but there are ways that you can help your child continue to develop the strong reading skills needed in college. Clip or email articles that might interest your child and suggest you discuss them. Ask questions about the books read in English class: What do you like about the book? What have you learned? Better yet, get a copy of a few of the same books, read them yourself, and talk to your child about your thoughts and impressions of the books.

Travel. College introduces students to many new ideas, cultures, and ways of doing things. Travel is a great way to help your teen get comfortable with new environments and people. You don't have to go all the way to Europe on a fancy trip for your child to reap the rewards. Even a quick trip to a new city an hour or two from home can help your child begin to see how to approach the larger world that awaits them in college.

Teach life skills. Academic success is important, but in order to live independently in college, your teen still needs to know how to do laundry, balance a checkbook, and make simple meals. Make a list of all of the basic day-to-day tasks you do for your child today, and gradually teach your child how to do each one on the list. Along with practical skills, teens should also work on the communication skills that are essential when living with a roommate. Coping with their emotions and interpersonal skills are also important as they venture into their new environment. Don't wait until the summer before college to get started. The sooner your child is able to confidently handle these tasks, the easier the transition to college will be.

NEPA Career & College Counseling Associates

Career Paths in Social Work

- *Child Welfare Officer*
- *Community Organizer*
- *Social Science Researcher*
- *Case Manager*
- *Program Evaluator*
- *Community Outreach Director*
- *Program Specialist*
- *Medical Discharge Planner*
- *Habilitation Specialist*
- *Grief Counselor*
- *Employee Program Counselor*
- *Housing & Community Development Director*
- *Non-Profit Director*
- *Grant Writer/Administrator*



Focus on Majors: Bachelor's in Social Work

Are you passionate about helping people in need and emphasizing interpersonal relationships? Are you thinking of becoming a therapist and considering psychology as your major? Social Work is an often overlooked major that is less popular than psychology. Social workers have the potential to drive change by working directly with individuals, at the policy level, or within an organization. The degree prepares students for entry level positions and advanced studies in graduate school.

While social workers can offer direct services or therapy, social work goes beyond individual assistance. It is a distinctive field wherein social workers support clients in functioning within their immediate environment, helping them holistically navigate both emotions and actions in specific situations. In addition, social workers help to raise awareness and dedicate time to advocacy to help their clients at the local, state, and sometimes national levels. Therefore, students who are not only passionate about helping others, but who are also dedicated to addressing a broad range of social skills and being an advocate for vulnerable populations should consider a major in social work. Successful social workers possess a combination of skills and qualities such as empathy, active listening, cultural competence, resilience, communication skills, and collaboration.

A Bachelor's in Social Work (BSW) program will provide a strong foundation to prepare a student to enter a field with various work opportunities and positions. Programs will train students to understand and contextualize problems, assess the needs of individuals and communities, and develop intervention strategies. Furthermore, programs develop students' skills in communication, critical thinking, and interpersonal relationships. Most BSW programs will have a variety of courses for students to take, including foundational

major courses, and other topics including human rights, the welfare state, research, human behavior, psychology, and ethics.

Another defining characteristic of a BSW is the requirement of field education or practicum. In a BSW program, students will not be confined to the traditional classroom structure. Instead, students can apply their knowledge through field work in an area in which they might find themselves working in the future. Field placements may include schools, hospice centers, or child welfare agencies, and students will develop their skills under experienced professionals. While the specifics of field work vary based on program, placements normally occur within the last two years, and students may work in various offices throughout their degree program.

Under the Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend program, many states offer students committed to careers in public child welfare stipends or educational reimbursements following graduation. This can be applied to different BSW and Master's programs at universities in participating states. Additionally, California, New York, Texas, Michigan, and Illinois offer loan forgiveness programs for those committed to working in specific areas of need, post graduation.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree, graduates can find entry-level positions in a range of occupational opportunities that extend beyond casework. With a Bachelor's in Social Work, graduates can work in hospitals, schools, government agencies, social services, and even correctional facilities. Many positions in social work require a license to practice; however, licensure differs greatly across the country. While in some states it is possible to obtain a license with a BSW, others require a Master's Degree to perform clinical roles.

NEPA Career & College Counseling Associates

Financial Matters: College Scholarships - What You Need to Know



Paying for college can feel overwhelming, but receiving scholarships can make the cost of college more manageable. Contrary to popular belief, you don't need to be an athlete or a student with a 4.0 GPA to qualify for a scholarship. What you do need is the time to research the many scholarships that are available. That is why the process of searching and applying for scholarships, ideally, should be started during your first year of high school.

Many colleges offer a variety of scholarships including merit-based scholarships or scholarships specifically for new students. Institutional scholarships come directly from the university that you applied to. These can benefit prospective students who don't qualify for student loans. Institutional scholarships can be found on the university's website under the financial aid department. Many colleges require the FAFSA to be filed in order to receive institutional scholarships.

Scholarship opportunities should be explored before you consider taking out federal or private student loans. While an institutional scholarship is considered a grant that you don't need to pay back, if you receive a private scholarship you are required to report it to the college you plan on attending and it may affect other aid you receive from the college.

Students can also use free scholarship matching services to search for the awards. Some of the services include [Fastweb](#) and [College Board's Big Future](#). During your search, you'll want to consider what sets you apart. For example, if you are the first person in your family to attend college, search the following keywords: "first generation student". According to the U.S. Department of Education, students should ask both their high school counselor and the college's financial aid office about scholarship opportunities. Institutions to research are foundations, religious and community organizations, businesses, and civic groups. Professional organizations and associations related to your field of interest, ethnicity-based organizations, and your employer or your parents' employers are other options to explore.

Each scholarship will have its own unique requirements and deadlines. For instance, the [Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation](#) awards up to \$20,000 annually. In 2023, they had 91,000 applicants, and at the end of a multi-phase process, they chose 150 recipients. To be considered for a large scholarship, you will most likely need to write an essay, obtain a recommendation letter, and possibly interview. On the flip side, there are scholarships with smaller awards, and the application process is less time-consuming. Did you know there is a Vegetarian Video Scholarship and an American Fire Sprinkler Association Scholarship? If you have the time and energy to research and apply for scholarships, it may be worth it financially.

The U.S. Department of Labor also has a [Scholarship Search Database](#). The website matches your background profile against a large database of scholarships, showing you only those for which you are eligible.

Remember, you should never have to pay to apply for scholarships. If you receive a letter in the mail or an email saying you have been selected for a scholarship that you never applied to, that is a red flag. Never give your information to a company that claims they can complete the FAFSA for a processing fee. These are all signs of a scam. If you are unsure, research the company before providing any of your personal information.

When applying for awards, make sure to understand your colleges displacement policies. Displacement policies are activated when a student receives an outside or private scholarship, which then results in a reduction in other forms of college aid. It is practiced by colleges and universities across the country. Though some states have banned scholarship displacement, it is important to check local laws. Use caution when reviewing the scholarship terms and conditions to make sure you understand what the issuer requires and under what circumstances you would have to repay the award.

Other important considerations - Is the scholarship renewable? Is there a minimum GPA stipulation? Do you receive the money in one lump sum, or is it sent directly to the university? Read the terms thoroughly. Parents and their teens should have an honest discussion about the cost of college as early as freshman year of high school. College cost calculators will give an estimate of the cost of attending each specific college. It is helpful if teens know the amount that has been saved for their education, the feasibility of student loans, and the possibility of receiving scholarships in order to help determine if the colleges of their choice are affordable.

Admission Office Blogs

Reading an admissions blog can give both parents and teens an honest view of the admissions process at a particular college. Instead of listening to other parents or friends, whose information may be inaccurate, blogs give you facts from Directors of Admission and current students. They are a way to get an idea of what makes each college unique and interesting. Blogs can put a human face on the institutional facade.

Student blogs usually cover information and insights into student life, academics and the culture at the college. High school students who are reading about the experiences of their peers might feel less stressed and better manage expectations of what college life will be like. Knowing that others have overcome challenges and still achieved their academic goals can be inspirational.

The blogs written by admissions deans offer years of experience and help eliminate myths that a parent or teen may believe. Since the world of college admissions is constantly changing, blogs can inform readers with information on current trends. There may also be details about the application timeline, required documents, and tips for making a strong application.

Here is a list of reader-worthy blogs. Even if there isn't a college that interests you in this sampling, it may be worth reading some of them to gain a better understanding of college admissions. Some of the blogs could even make you laugh. Remember, when reading the blogs that the writer's perspectives will vary according to their institution and experiences.

Georgia Tech Admission Blog

<https://sites.gatech.edu/admission-blog/>

Admissions Blog at Illinois

<https://blog.admissions.illinois.edu/>

Tulane University Office of Undergrad Admissions blog

<https://admissionblog.tulane.edu/>

Jon Boeckenstedt

<https://jonboeckenstedt.net/>

University of Virginia Admissions Blog

<https://uvaapplication.blogspot.com/>

Tufts Inside Admissions

<https://admissions.tufts.edu/blogs/inside-admissions/>

MIT Admissions

<https://mitadmissions.org/blogs/>



Jennifer Kresock, MS
Private Career & College
Counselor
jkresock@NEPACareerand
CollegeCounseling.com
570.702.5700
NEPACareerandCollege
Counseling.com
Follow us on Twitter, Face-
book and Instagram