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Visit [www.nationalcollegefairs.org](http://www.nationalcollegefairs.org) for the college fair schedules.

## THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE? THINK OF US.

[WWW.NACACNET.ORG](http://WWW.NACACNET.ORG) • 800/822-6285

If you would like additional copies of this brochure, contact the NACAC national office:

### Guide for Parents

1050 N. Highland Street  
Suite 400  
Arlington, VA 22201

Phone: 703/836-2222  
800/822-6285  
Fax: 703/243-9375

[www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org)

If you need more information about college admission, contact the counselors in your school. They want to help you make good decisions about your future.

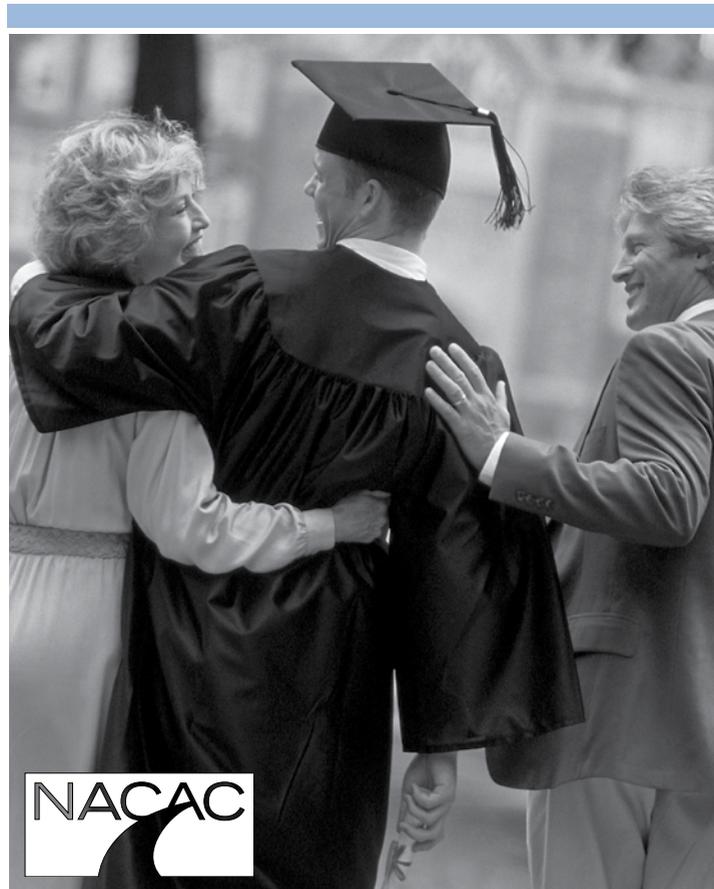
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National Association for College Admission Counseling

# GUIDE FOR PARENTS

## in the College Admission Process



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**WHAT** can you do as a parent to encourage your child to prepare for the future?

**HOW** does your child prepare now, for a career later?

**WHY** should your child continue with his or her education beyond a high school diploma?

# GUIDE FOR PARENTS

*As a parent, you want the best for your child's future. Planning should begin as early as middle school. If you wait until the junior or senior year of high school, you've waited too long. This brochure will help you and your child make the right decisions now, when it counts.*

*The selection of a college—including the cost—is an important decision for the whole family. Going to college costs a lot; but if you need money, it is available, provided you plan ahead.*

### What is financial assistance?

Financial assistance is money to help pay for college. This money can be used for educational expenses (tuition, fees and books), as well as for other expenses (food, housing and transportation). Grants, loans, scholarships and work study are the four types.

### Can I get financial assistance if my child doesn't want to go to a four-year college?

Yes. Money is available for two-year community or junior colleges (as well as for business, vocational/trade schools). At schools that typically prepare students for transfer to a four-year college, such as a community college, ask for information about the transfer-out rate.

### How is financial aid determined?

You must show that you need money to be awarded financial aid. Need is the difference between what it costs to attend college and what your family can afford to pay. Special talent and academic scholarships and grants are available at many institutions.

### How can I find money for my child's education?

The guidance counselor can direct you to resources to help you learn about applying for money for college. Don't pay for guaranteed scholarships. You can begin to research financial aid as early as ninth grade. Don't be misled by others. There are more students and families receiving financial assistance for education than you may think.

### Using the Internet In Your College Search

The Internet is a great place for future college students to gather information about colleges. There are many Web sites that can help guide you through the college selection process. Some Web sites can help you prepare for, choose, apply and find ways to pay for a college education. Other sites require a fee before using their information, but most offer free information.

Colleges and university Web sites provide quite a bit of information about the admission process, student life, faculty and administrator info, weather conditions, campus maps, virtual campus tours, live images of the main campus as viewed through a Web camera, and chat rooms where you can interact with other students.

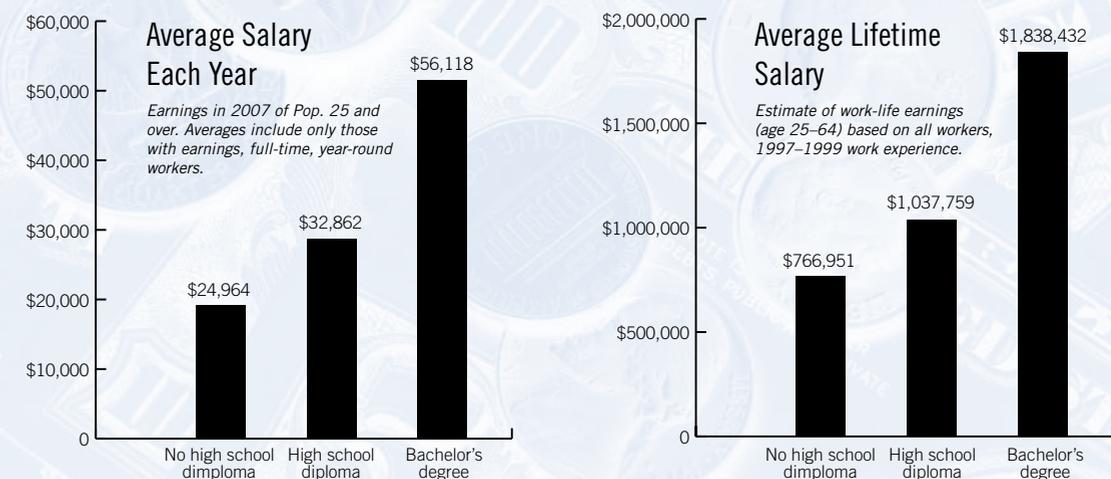
### Useful Financial Aid Web Sites

Free Application for Federal Student Aid  
[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Finding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid  
[www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)

Free Guide to all US Government Grants and Student Loans  
[www.fedmoney.org](http://www.fedmoney.org)

Does a college degree make a difference in what my child will earn after high school?



# TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS

## What are the first steps?

1. Planning for college can start as early as middle school.
2. Talk with your child's guidance counselor or teacher about your child's options after high school.
3. Keep and use this guide to be sure that your child is taking the right courses.
4. Encourage your child to study and take competitive courses.
5. Be involved in school activities. Go to parents' nights and conferences and meet with your child's teachers.
6. Be sure your child is taking the most difficult courses he or she can handle so that college and career choices are open.
7. Encourage your child to participate in school, community and church activities.

## What should my child do?

1. Your child's ability to read, write and use a computer is the most important and basic skill needed for the future.
2. Your child needs a firm foundation in rigorous, high level math and English courses.
3. Your child should take advantage of courses offered in science, social studies, foreign languages and performing arts.
4. Your child must learn good study habits.
5. Your child should consider what he or she wants to do after high school and discuss options with the school counselor or teachers.

## What can I as a parent do?

1. Believe in your child's abilities.
2. Take an interest in what your child is studying and his other homework.
3. Help your child remain focused on school.
4. Visit the school and schedule conferences.
5. The courses your child takes and the grades he or she now receives have a lot to do with what your child can do after high school.
6. Work with your child on the development of his or her schedule of courses.
7. Create a quiet place for your child to study.
8. Start early when researching financial aid.

## How do I find out what courses my child should take?

Talk with the counselor or teacher at the school. He or she can show you what classes best prepare your child for the future. Principals may also help. Use the chart on the opposite panel as a guide to be sure that your child takes the recommended courses. You are encouraged to work with your child's guidance counselor in the development of his or her schedule. Research the admission requirements of the colleges your student is preparing for because requirements can vary from institution to institution. Most colleges require some form of standardizing testing. Discuss with the counselor test dates, prep courses and so on.

## Colleges and Universities (four-year):

Institutions made up of divisions called schools or colleges. Geared toward preparation for professional occupations such as accounting, engineering, and health services. Traditional classroom setting. Offer BA or BS degrees upon completion of program.

## Community and Junior Colleges (two-year):

Institutions are conveniently located in local communities. Specialize in college transfer programs often tied to four-year colleges in state or area. Usually respond to local employment demand by offering courses in needed areas. Offer associate degrees or certificates upon completion of program.

## Comprehensive Institutions:

Award baccalaureate, may also award associate degrees; offer graduate degree programs primarily at the master's, specialist's, or professional level, although one or two doctoral programs may be offered.

## Military Academies:

Military establishments that combine education and training for the armed forces in large and very structured institutions. There are five service academies in the U.S., all of which require serving at least four or six years as officers in exchange for four years of education. The military's goal is to produce officers who are well educated both academically and in the workings of the military itself. Offer degrees upon completion of officer training program.

## Performing and Visual Arts Colleges:

Institutions including universities, colleges, schools, and conservatories with programs of study in the areas of music, art, theater, dance and related disciplines. Many conservatory programs emphasize auditions and portfolio presentation. Offer degrees or professional degrees upon completion of program.

## Specialized Colleges:

Colleges that concentrate their offerings in one or two specific areas are classified as specialized colleges. They include colleges offering the following types of study: agricultural/technical, art/music, Bible, business, engineering, health sciences, military, seminary/rabbinical, and teacher preparation. Some are two-year colleges; others offer four years of study.

## Vocational, Technical and Business Schools:

Private proprietary schools specializing in trades or vocations by offering various courses and occupational programs. Specialize in skill training (e.g., welding, cooking, hair styling, and word processing) required for a specific job. Offer certificates upon completion of training program.

# HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PLANNER

	Grade _____ Fall Semester	Credits	Grade _____ Spring Semester	Credits
English				
Mathematics				
History/Social Studies				
Science				
Foreign Language				
Visual/Performing Arts				
Electives				
Credits Earned				
Accumulated Credits <i>(including previous years)</i>				

Courtesy: Adventures in Education at [www.aie.org](http://www.aie.org). The table above will make your student's high school course planning easier and better organized. If your student needs help determining requirements or finding out what courses are available, have him or her speak to his or her guidance counselor.

## Minimum Education Requirements for Various Institutions

	2-Year and 4-Year Colleges, Universities and Military Academies	Performing and Visual Arts Colleges	Vocational and Technical Schools	Business Schools
English	4 years	4 years	4 years	4 years
Science, including Laboratory	3-4 years Biology, Chemistry, Physics	3-4 years	1-3 years	1-3 years
Math	3-4 years Algebra I and II, Geometry Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus Calculus	3-4 years	2-4 years	3-4 years
History/Social Sciences	3-4 years	2-4 years	2-4 years	3-4 years
Foreign Language	2-4 years of same language	2-3 years of same language	2-4 years of same language	3-4 years of same language
Other Activities, including Community Service Work, and Participation in Clubs	Music, Art, Dance, Drama	Music, Art, Dance, Drama	Shop and skills courses	Shorthand, Accounting

*Familiarity with computer skills and a foreign language is becoming a prerequisite in specialized schools.*