

College Planning Timeline

9th Grade

- ❑ Review general college admission requirements
- ❑ Be sure to take college-prep classes
- ❑ Fill out class planning sheet which covers the next three years
- ❑ Document volunteer work (letters from the places you volunteered that explain the name of the place, what you did, when and where you did it, and what they observed about your volunteer work)
- ❑ Take the PLAN test in October (a practice ACT test with a career/interest component)
- ❑ Begin to talk about, and talk to parents about, college financing plan
- ❑ Start applying for college scholarships that will be reserved until you enter college
 - www.fastweb.com
- ❑ Look at college websites to start examining college choices
 - www.collegeincolorado.org

10th Grade

- ❑ Meet with your high school counselor to discuss course work and college plans
- ❑ Plan the best possible schedule for yourself—challenge yourself
- ❑ Document volunteer work (letters from the places you volunteered that explain the name of the place, what you did, when and where you did it, and what they observed about your volunteer work)
- ❑ It's a good idea to take practice college entrance exams in the fall. Take a PSAT test in October (a practice SAT test).
- ❑ Take the ACT test at the end of 10th grade; only if you've taken Chemistry and Advanced Algebra this year
- ❑ Begin to think about possible career goals/interests. Visit your school's career center. Visit websites that have career interest tests.
- ❑ Apply for college scholarships that will be reserved until you enter college
 - www.fastweb.com
- ❑ Look at college websites to start examining college choices
 - www.collegeincolorado.org
- ❑ Plan to visit colleges you might be considering. Plan a family trip that would include a college visit so you can get a feel for that college campus. Or consider visiting nearby colleges to gain a better understanding of different types of schools—i.e.: large public university, small private college, etc.
- ❑ Remember – summer jobs can mean money for your college!

11th Grade

- ❑ Fall of 11th grade, begin building a list of possible colleges; think about those values that are important to you (academic program, location, size, cost, activities, athletics, Christian, etc.)
- ❑ Attend college fairs and/or visit with college admissions representatives at your high school
- ❑ Visit your high school Counseling Office/Career Center; request information from Colleges
- ❑ Document volunteer work (letters from the places you volunteered that explain the name of the place, what you did, when and where you did it, and what they observed about your volunteer work)
- ❑ Think about career/major choices
- ❑ In the spring, meet with your school counselor to review courses, course credits, college information, and senior classes
- ❑ Take the PSAT/NMSQT test in October
- ❑ Take the ACT and/or SAT college admission test in the spring
- ❑ Begin exploring scholarship and financial aid opportunities
 - Visit www.fastweb.com for scholarships designed for you
- ❑ Plan to take strong academic courses during your senior year and strive to achieve your academic best
- ❑ Summer between Jr. & Sr. year: visit colleges you may be considering. If this is not practical for you and your family, consider visiting nearby colleges to gain a better understanding of different types of schools—i.e.: large public university, small private college, etc.
- ❑ Fill out college applications over the summer (each application takes about 2 hours to fill out...remember this is the only impression the college has of you, so make it look great!)
- ❑ You can now visit many schools on the web
 - www.collegeincolorado.org

12th Grade

- ❑ Meet with high school counselor early in fall semester to discuss college plans
- ❑ Attend college fairs and/or meet with college admissions representatives at your high school
- ❑ Document volunteer work (letters from the places you volunteered that explain the name of the place, what you did, when and where you did it, and what they observed about your volunteer work)
- ❑ Narrow college choices and fill out applications by early November
- ❑ Determine deadlines and requirements for your college choices and stick to them
- ❑ Make a rough draft of your college entrance essay(s) and have a teacher or counselor review it in early fall. Write your final draft.
- ❑ Take the ACT or SAT exam in the early fall and forward your scores to the colleges to which you have applied or plan to apply
- ❑ Request transcripts, recommendations, and other supporting data to be sent to colleges (obtain from the counseling office, then give to the Registrar)
- ❑ Good rule of thumb: Submit applications by the end of November (but be sure to check each individual school's deadline)
- ❑ Keep copies of everything you send
- ❑ Apply for all possible scholarships at the colleges, as well as others
 - www.fastweb.com
 - You or your parent's work place, insurance companies (Thrivent), etc.
- ❑ Apply for need-based financial aid as soon after January 1st as possible.
 - Fill out the FAFSA form as soon as possible
 - Need income tax papers completed or estimated for the FAFSA work
- ❑ Visit colleges to which you've applied, if not done before
- ❑ Make final choice and notify school(s) no later than April 1st. Send acceptance letter and any necessary documents and deposits to your college of choice. Write polite letter of refusal to others.
- ❑ Most scholarship money offered by the colleges runs out at the end of March, so plan to have all paperwork done as soon as possible when hoping to get monies from the college of your choice
- ❑ If offered, plan to attend the summer orientation program at the college in which you will be enrolling.

The following information is taken from:

“High School Parent Guidebook” by Linda O’Brien. Woodburn Press, 2005 (p. 21-24).
www.woodburnpress.com

Career and Educational Options

Career Options

Choosing a career and figuring out how to prepare for that career can be very difficult. Your children need you to help them explore and evaluate their career and educational options.

Identify abilities and interests. As parents, you know your children better than anyone. You can, therefore, be invaluable resources in helping your children identify their strengths, interests, talents, and values. Help your children also see how their interests, strengths, and personality traits can be assets in the right careers. Remember, many talents aren’t measured in school (e.g., the ability to work with people, creativity, leadership ability).

Explore career options. Students can learn about various careers by 1) reading, 2) talking to people, and 3) getting firsthand experience.

If your child is interested in reading about a career, go to www.bls.gov/oco/. This Web site provides information on over 250 careers. For each career it gives a description of the work, the educational requirements, advancement opportunities, advantages, disadvantages, wages and salaries, future outlook, and related careers.

Encourage your child to talk to people who work in various career fields. If possible, see if you can arrange for your child to job shadow someone for a day.

The best way to learn about a career is to get some firsthand experience by taking a course, getting involved in a related extracurricular activity, or getting a job in a related field. Volunteering is also an excellent way to learn about a career field. Students considering a career in health care, for example, could volunteer at a hospital or clinic. Students interested in the building trades could volunteer at Habitat for Humanity.

Educational Options

Approximately 80% of all careers require education and/or training beyond a general high school education. Some careers require four years of college. Others require one year of education or training at a career school or community college. In many cases, a student’s career choice will determine which educational option is most appropriate.

While there are many factors that determine the kinds of opportunities a student will have in life, the most significant determining factor is education. *Make sure that your child understands the importance of getting a good education, and strongly encourage your child to continue his/her education after high school.*

High school students should strongly consider and explore the following educational options:

Career and Technology Programs	Career Schools
Four-Year Colleges	The Military
Community Colleges	Apprenticeships

*Note: The first career option, **Career and Technology Programs**, enables students to prepare for a specific career while they are still in high school. The other five educational options are for high school graduates.*

Career and Technology Programs

Most high schools offer career and technology programs in a variety of career fields (CEC: skilled trades, computer technology, culinary arts, fire science, medical careers, etc.). These programs are particularly appropriate for students who prefer a more practical, “hands-on” approach to learning. While students in these programs generally have the skills they need to get a job as soon as they graduate, almost two-thirds continue their education beyond high school.

If you think your child might do better in an educational program that focuses on “learning by doing,” ask your child’s counselor for information on the career and technology programs at your school.

This program is available to Juniors and Seniors only, provided that enough credits have been accumulated at that time.

Four-Year Colleges

A four-year college education, or a bachelor’s degree, can open doors, provide status, and prepare students for financially rewarding careers. Four-year colleges vary greatly in their size, costs, admission policies, and majors that they offer.

In order to be ready for college level work, students need to follow a college prep program in high school. Students who want to go to a four year college also need to sign up for the right tests (ACT or SAT) and complete the required forms.

To make sure your child will be prepared for college, talk to your child’s guidance counselor.

Community Colleges

Community colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs that enable students to begin their careers after two years of college or less. Business, law-enforcement, real estate, automotive, interior decorator, engineering technology are just a few of the careers that students can prepare for by going to a community college.

Students can also attend a community college for a year or two, and then transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor’s degree. The community college system in Colorado works very closely with the four-year institutions to ensure that all credits will transfer to the new school.

Community college is about half the cost of a four-year college. With the assurance that credits will transfer, it is a money saving decision to attend community college first.

Career Schools

Career schools offer short-term training programs in a wide variety of career fields (e.g., cosmetology, computer technology, automotive, dental hygiene, welding, etc.). While some programs last only a few weeks, others take up to two years to complete. Career schools can be expensive, and not all of them are reputable. Look in the yellow pages of the phone book under “schools” to find the career school in your area. *Make sure that any school you are considering is accredited.*

The Military

The military trains young men and women so that they can protect the interests of our country. The military offers qualified high school graduates a good salary and free job training. The military also provides discipline and structure, as well as opportunity for career advancement and travel. In addition to the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, there are opportunities in the Reserves and the National Guard. For more information, go to www.military.com.

Apprenticeships

Students who prefer a hands-on approach to learning may want to consider applying for an apprenticeship program. Apprentices learn a skilled trade (e.g., carpentry, plumbing, roofing, firefighting, etc.) through a combination of classroom instruction and on the job training. Apprenticeship programs usually last 1-6 years. Because most apprenticeship programs have a limited number of openings, they can be difficult to get into.

Parents, above all, continue to have conversations with your children about career choices and life after high school. It is not uncommon for teens to have two or three ideas one time, and the next time have two or three different ideas. Exploring these ideas is what career choices is all about. Blessings on guiding your children into careers that use their God-given skills and abilities.