

Respect & Responsibility

As a parent, you want your teenager to be both respectful and responsible. Together, these important character traits not only make a teen more pleasant to live with—they can enhance her self-esteem and help her succeed in school, at work, and beyond. Here are ways to encourage respect and responsibility in your child.



Respect yourself

People who respect themselves believe others should treat them well, and they in turn are more likely to treat others with respect.

Expect respect. Let your child know that she deserves to be respected by friends. For example, she should be able to share opinions without being made fun of. Or she should be able to make her own decisions about where to spend time or with whom—without being criticized for her choices. Together, make a list of ways that people can show respect for each other. She can use that as a measure for whether her relationships are respectful ones.

Consider yourself. When your teen stands up for her beliefs or says no to things that make her uncomfortable, she is showing self-respect. Also, she demonstrates respect for

herself when she gives her best to her commitments, including schoolwork, after-school activities, or a part-time job. For instance, doing homework carefully and arriving for her job on time show that she takes pride in her work.



Respect others

When your teen is respectful of others, it can help him connect better with siblings, peers, teachers, and bosses.

Show respect. Your child should think about how his actions—and his words—affect others. Do they make people feel valued? For instance, is he honest and direct with his friends, rather than talking behind their backs or putting them down in front of others? Does he demonstrate respect for your privacy by keeping family confidences? Encourage him to think about who he respects and what traits those people have. That will help him understand what respect looks and feels like.

Model what you mean. Your teenager will learn best by following your example. Try to

let him see you being respectful to others by listening politely when people disagree with you. Also, you can demonstrate respect for your child by following through on your promises to him or apologizing when you make a mistake. If he is disrespectful, you have another chance to model respect. Focus on his behavior in a calm way (“I don’t like the way you are speaking to me”) rather than attacking him (“You are so rude!”). He will see that you can disagree with someone in a respectful way.



Tip: Reinforce the behavior that you would like to see by showing that you notice when he behaves respectfully. For example, if he tells you he was upset when you mentioned his grades in front of his aunt, you might say, “I really appreciate your waiting until we got home to talk about it. I’m sure that was hard for you not to say something then. Let’s discuss it now.”

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Be a good sport

Student athletes who treat opponents, teammates, coaches, and officials with dignity are always winners. Share these ways your child can show respect on the field or court:

- Shake hands with opponents before a game. After the game, shake hands or give high fives and nicely say, "Good game."



- Accept officials' calls gracefully.
- Play by the rules, regardless of whether actions can be seen from the sidelines.
- Avoid "trash talking" to opponents or "showboating" (victory dances, bragging).

You can also set an example of respectful behaviors for your teen when you're watching a sporting event. How?

- Offer encouragement ("Way to go!"), and refrain from booing or making insults or negative remarks.
- Be polite to opposing teams and their fans (say hello, congratulate them on a win).
- Clap for good plays even if your child is not the one who made them.
- Discuss concerns with your teen's coach privately, rather than in front of your child or other fans.

Responsible to yourself

Being a responsible individual starts with your teen being responsible to himself.

Care for belongings. Whether it's electronics, textbooks, or bedroom furniture, encourage your teen to be responsible for his things. He might put items away when he stops using them so they don't get lost or stepped



on. If something breaks, he should make sure it gets fixed. *Note:* He should also take care of others' belongings. If he borrows something from a friend or relative, he should return it on time—and in the same condition it was in when he got it.

Take personal responsibility. Your child should know that he is responsible for the choices he makes—and for accepting the consequences for those decisions. Point out that as your child gets older, he is more and more responsible for his own happiness, too. Suggest that he consider his own strengths and abilities and use them to plan for the future. Also, encourage him to take care of his body by getting enough sleep (at least 8–9 hours), eating nutritious foods, and being physically active for an hour a day.

Responsible to others

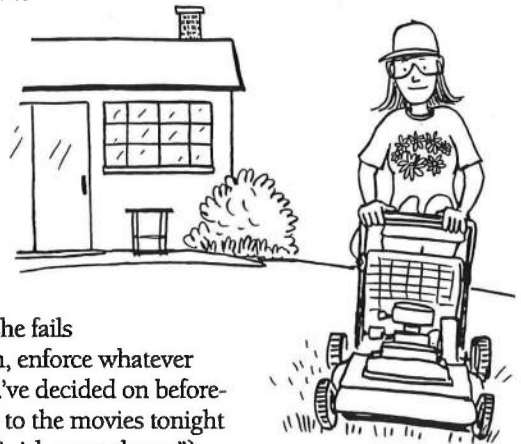
Being dependable means behaving in a way that allows others to rely on you.

Hold her accountable. If your adolescent forgets about chores or lets duties

slide, you might remind her with a simple phrase ("Lawn") or simply point to what needs to be done (lawn that needs to be mowed). But don't do the job for her. Then, if she fails to follow through, enforce whatever consequence you've decided on beforehand ("No going to the movies tonight since you didn't finish your chores").

For regular chores or responsibilities, you might consider writing a plan and having her sign it. ("I will clean my bathroom by Sunday night each week. I understand I won't be able to use the computer until it's done.") That way, you both know what's expected.

Point out the impact. You might shed light on how being responsible benefits your teen. When she shows you she can take care of responsibilities, she earns your trust and perhaps more freedom. Also, you could discuss how her actions affect others if she fails to follow through. For example, if she promises a club advisor to set up a meeting and doesn't do it, the club may not be able to register for an important event. That affects everyone in the club and could also influence her relationships with her peers.



High School Years

Three Keys to HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS

Your high schooler probably has a lot to juggle: challenging classes, extracurricular activities, friends, family commitments, and possibly a part-time job. How can he thrive in school?

Knowing how to get organized, manage his time, and study efficiently can help him do his best. Share these strategies to help your child succeed in high school.



ORGANIZATION

Being organized lets your teen be more productive, because she'll have what she needs when she needs it. Suggest that she try these ideas.

Create a workspace. Your child should have a comfortable place to work that's well lit and free from distractions. It's best if she finds a place she can dedicate to schoolwork so she starts associating it with getting things done. She may be better off working at a desk in her room or at the kitchen table rather than on her bed or the couch by the TV. Wherever she works, she needs room to spread out materials. *Hint:* Cleaning out her workspace on occasion (say, once a month) can help her stay organized.

Stock supplies. Keeping graph paper, index cards, highlighters, and other supplies on hand will help your teenager stay on task—he won't have to stop what he's doing to search

for them. At the beginning of the school year or semester, suggest that he inventory what he has and make a list of what he needs to buy or find



around the house. As the year continues, he should keep an eye on what's getting low.

If your child works in a common space like the dining room table, he might want to make a portable supply kit. He could fill a plastic tote or shoebox with his supplies. Then, each day when he's finished, he should put everything away.

Sort papers. Multiple classes mean several sets of books and notebooks, only some of which need to come home on any given day. Your high schooler can keep track by using separate color-coded materials for each class so she can easily spot history (red binder and folder) or calculus (blue binder and folder). *Hint:* Using loose-leaf binders for notes and handouts instead of spiral notebooks makes it easier to move or add papers.



Each week, your child should sort papers from the week before. She can file them in binders or folders. *Tip:* Having a three-hole punch nearby can make this task easier.

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TIME MANAGEMENT

Knowing what's on her agenda will give your teen a sense of control and help prevent stress. It can also ensure that she has time for everything from schoolwork to socializing. Here are some tips to help her get a handle on her day.

Keep calendars and to-do lists. Your child needs to see how much time she has and how she uses it. Suggest that she use a daily planner to schedule her time: in half-hour increments and keep the planner with her at school so she can update it with assignments, tests, and due dates.

Also, reviewing her planner each night or in the morning will prepare her for the day ahead. She could transfer big items to a master calendar on her bulletin board or wall so she can see them at a glance. She can also use sticky notes on mirrors or dressers for reminders.

Schedule study time. Encourage your high schooler to set aside specific times to study, picking periods when he's more alert. *Idea:* Have him experiment with different times and see what works best. Also, he should plan short breaks (maybe a 10-minute walk around the block after a 50-minute study session). Have him review his schedule weekly—he may need to make adjustments for evening activities or work.

To get the most from his day, your teen should also take advantage of free time in his schedule. During study hall, between school and sports practice or club meetings, or while riding in the car, he can review notes, study vocabulary, or go over end-of-chapter questions.

Overcome time wasters.

Help your child learn to say "no" to distractions that can throw her off track. Say a friend calls to ask her to go to the mall when she's supposed to be researching a science project. She can simply say, "Today's not good. How about Thursday?"



Have her turn off her cell phone completely and stay off Facebook or instant-messaging sites when she's doing homework or studying. That way, she won't be tempted to check a vibrating phone or a beeping computer.



Avoid procrastination. If your teen has a tendency to procrastinate, suggest that he tell himself things like, "Do it now, and I can have a fun weekend."

He can also set a timer for 10 minutes and start on something he doesn't want to do, telling himself he can stop

when the time is up. Odds are, he'll probably get into the project and keep going.

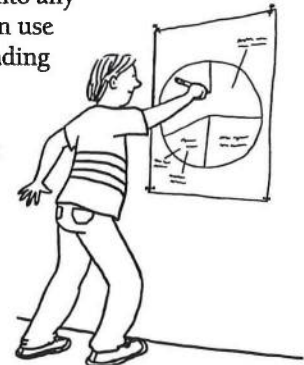
STUDYING

Good study skills help your high schooler be efficient so he can get the most out of what he learns in school in the least amount of time. Smart students know secrets like these.

Start at school. Studying doesn't begin when your teen sits down at home to do his work—it starts when he's in school each day. Being in class, listening, taking good notes, and participating in discussions are a big boon to your child's learning. Then, when he reviews at home, it's the second time he's seeing the material, making it easier to remember.

Stay focused. Study time doesn't benefit your teenager if her mind wanders. She can learn to stay focused with some simple techniques. For instance, she might notice a stray thought and remind herself, "Be here now," or she could visualize the thought in her mind and "watch" it float away. Getting enough sleep and eating nutritious foods (fruit, vegetables, protein) can also help your teen focus, since they fuel her body and boost brainpower.

Shape information. Working with information is like molding clay on a pottery wheel. Your high schooler can take the material and shape it into any form that makes sense so he can use it. When reviewing notes or reading his textbook, he might create charts, graphs, or drawings so data is visual and easy to digest (for example, a chart of survey results or a picture demonstrating a math formula). Or he can pull out crucial points and make study sheets for quick review.



High School Years

Avoiding Risky Behaviors

The high school years give you a glimpse of the young adult your child is becoming. They also bring new challenges in keeping him safe. Here are ways you can help your teen avoid dangerous substances, be a safe driver, and have healthy dating relationships.



Prevent drug use

One of the best ways to prevent your children from experimenting with alcohol and other drugs is to talk about the subject.



■ **Risks.** Ask what they know about drugs, and make it clear you don't want them trying any. Point out that using drugs at this age is especially harmful because their brains and bodies are still growing.

Also, focus on risks that will matter to *them*. For example, your teen could be kicked off a sports team or get a bad reputation.

■ **Parties.** If there's a party, check with the parents ahead of time. Make sure the teens will be supervised and that alcohol won't be served. If you're uncertain whether a party will be safe, say no and offer an alternative, like letting your child have friends over.

■ **Saying no.** Go over ways to turn down alcohol or drugs. Your teen might simply say "No, thanks," use humor ("I don't look good in handcuffs"), or use you or school as an excuse ("My parents would ground me forever" or "I have a paper to write").

Be aware of drugs

Different drugs are popular in different places. To learn what's common where you live, ask local police or school administrators what they see. Watch for substances like these.

■ **Alcohol.** People who start drinking at a younger age have a greater chance of becoming addicted. Keep an eye on alcohol if you have it at home (for instance, check the levels in liquor bottles). Better yet, lock it up.

■ **Nicotine.** While smoking is on the decline among young people, e-cigarettes are gaining popularity. And using e-cigs to inhale nicotine-based vapor can get young people hooked. Let your high schooler know these devices are off-limits.

■ **Marijuana.** Surveys show that adolescents don't see as much of a risk in using "weed" as they used to. Explain to your teen that marijuana carries special risks for adolescent brains. For instance, it's been shown to damage attention and memory, making it harder to learn.

■ **Prescription drugs.** Teenagers might use medications like painkillers, tranquilizers, antidepressants, sleeping pills, or stimulants (like ADHD medicines), thinking they aren't as dangerous as "regular" drugs. Tell your child it's illegal to use someone else's prescription and that doing so can be addictive and deadly. Get rid of unused medications, or lock them in cabinets.



■ **Heroin.** Adolescents who become addicted to prescription drugs may turn to heroin because it's cheaper and easier to get. Explain to your teen that using heroin is extremely dangerous, and it's a vicious cycle. Withdrawal symptoms are severe, leading the user to seek more heroin to feel better.

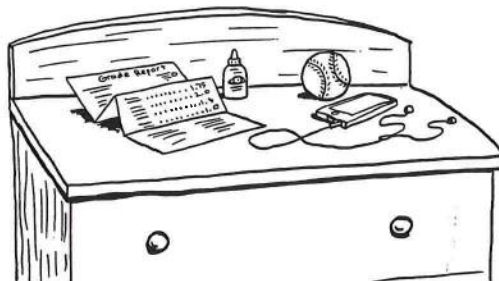
Note: Become familiar with drug-related slang by checking sites like noslang.com/drugs. Keep an eye on your child's texts and social media posts for drug terms.

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Drugs: Warning signs

Symptoms vary by drug, but below are common ones. Since some are typical teen behaviors, you'll need to consider whether they continue longer than normal or whether two or more are happening together. Look for:

- Withdrawing from family, friends, and activities
- Significant drop in grades
- Unusual tiredness or energy
- Unexplained nausea or vomiting
- Red or flushed face
- Skin irritations or bruises
- Frequent nosebleeds or runny nose
- Excessive thirst
- Increased use of eyedrops (to reduce redness)



- Sudden use of air fresheners, scented candles, or incense (to cover up drug, cigarette, or alcohol odor)
- Unusual activity regarding money (frequently asking for money, selling personal belongings, stealing)

If you suspect your child is using drugs, check with teachers to see if they've noticed anything unusual. Ask your teen directly, and let her know you care about her safety and want to get her help. If she denies using them but symptoms continue, take her to the doctor for a medical opinion. You can also call the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids helpline (855-378-4373).

Encourage safe driving

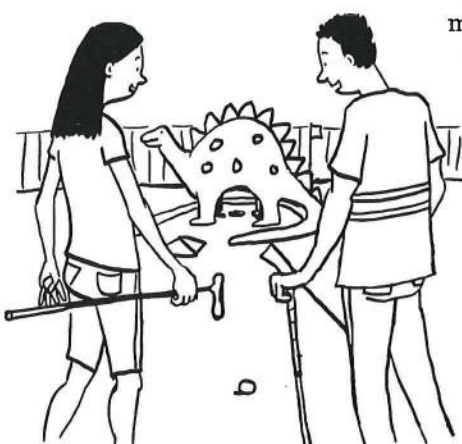
Teen drivers are more likely than other age groups to get into accidents. Make your child safer behind the wheel by practicing in different conditions at different times (rain, snow, dawn, dusk) and in different places (side streets, highways, parking lots). Point out strategies that work for each situation. For instance, bright sun can blind your sight temporarily, so wear sunglasses and keep the visor down. In rain or snow, drive more slowly and leave extra room between cars.

Start your teen out slowly once he gets his license. You might allow him to drive only to school and work at first. Over time, perhaps he could drive farther away. Also, even if state law doesn't limit passengers for teen drivers, consider not allowing friends in the car—they can be distracting and may encourage showing off.

Let your teenager know that driving provides freedom but comes with responsibility. That means following ground rules like wearing a seat belt on every trip (no matter how short), never texting while driving, and obeying the speed limit and other laws. Consider putting teeth into those responsibilities, too. You might require your teen to pay for any tickets he gets, damage from any accidents he causes, and additional insurance costs.



Promote healthy dating



Your high schooler may or may not be dating yet—either way, talk about healthy relationships. Discuss how one should be treated and should treat a partner. For instance, partners should respect each other and give

each other time with family and friends. They should also share decision making or be willing to compromise. If partners try to change each other, limit one another's time for outside interests, or insist on making all the decisions, the relationship is out of balance.

Sadly, teen dating violence is all too common. Explain that under no circumstances should your child or a date hurt each other physically, call one another names, or force sexual activity. Let your teens know they can come to you or another trusted adult if they ever think a partner is abusive.

Talking to your teenagers about sex will also help protect them. Explain your views, and listen to theirs. Tell them you're willing to answer questions and that you plan to bring up the subject again.

High School Years

Testing 1-2-3

It's test day! Is your teenager ready? Here are answers to questions parents often have about test taking in high school. Share this advice with your child to help him feel confident and perform well on test day.



Q What does my high schooler need to keep in mind as he prepares for tests?

A The first order of business is to know what will be on a quiz or an exam. Your teenager should pay close attention during class reviews and take any practice tests the teacher or textbook offers.



To review notes, your child might type highlights from each day's material into a computer file. Typing his notes will help him remember them better, and he can use the file as a study guide.

Encourage your teen to pace himself. Cramming is stressful and usually doesn't result in real learning—only a temporary (and often spotty) memory of the material. Instead, he should start preparing for tests as soon as they are announced.

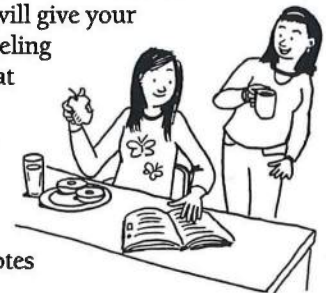
Q Besides studying, what else should my child do before a test?

A Urge her to get ready the night before. She can load up her bag with any necessary test gear, such as pencils and

eyeglasses. If permitted, she could bring a calculator (with extra batteries), a healthy snack, and a water bottle.

Also, eating a good breakfast will give your teen energy and keep her from feeling anxious or shaky. Remind her that caffeine could cause her to feel nervous and jittery during a test.

Suggest that your high schooler get to class early. She'll have a few extra minutes to take out supplies, look over notes one last time, and get focused.



Q How can my teen feel confident before and during an exam?

A Teach him relaxation techniques he can do during the test. Deep, slow breaths and positive thoughts can increase his confidence. *Example:* "I am going to do well because I am prepared."

Help your child avoid distractions by suggesting that he keep his eyes on his own paper and not worry about students who finish before he does. Remind him that faster doesn't mean better.

Finally, encourage your teen to stay active by making time for 30–60 minutes of exercise each day. That will give him more energy and help him feel less stressed.

Q What test-taking strategies can I share with my high schooler?

A Help her budget her time. When she receives the test, she should do a quick survey of the entire exam and consider how long she will need for each section. She'll want to allow more time for harder portions or those that are worth the most points.

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Advise your child to read all directions carefully. She should never assume that she knows what the instructions say. For instance, some questions may have more than one correct answer.

Your high schooler can use any extra time to go back to skipped questions and look for careless mistakes. She might redo math calculations or double-check dates on history quizzes, for instance.

Q What special advice can I give my child for different test formats?

A For true-false tests, it's helpful to circle key words in the question. If any part of a choice is false, the whole thing is false. Encourage your teen to watch for tip-off words like *never*, *always*, *all*, *none*, or *only*—they often indicate a “false”

answer. Words like *usually*, *sometimes*, and *generally* may be clues that a “true” choice is correct. He should answer every question—there's at least a 50 percent chance a guess will be right.

When taking a multiple-choice exam, your child might read the question and try to answer it before looking at the options. Then he can read the choices, eliminate those that are clearly wrong, and select the one closest to his initial idea.

Remind him not to leave any answers blank (if there's no penalty for wrong answers). Even if he doesn't know the answer, he has a 25 percent chance of success when there are four choices.

For essay questions, suggest that your teen make an outline of main ideas and supporting facts. All of his points should be backed up with examples, and he shouldn't stray from the topic. Encourage him to reread the question halfway through and at the end to make sure he has answered all parts. Finally, he should go back and proofread carefully—spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors can lower his score.



SAT and ACT success

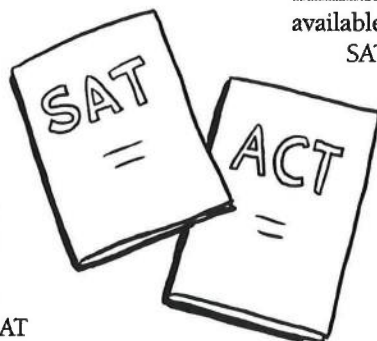
Are you hoping your teen will go to college? Here are valuable hints for helping her prepare for college entrance exams.

Q Which test should my child take?

A She should check requirements at the colleges she might want to attend. Many students take both the SAT and the ACT and send in their best scores. Your teen can also get advice from her school counselor.

Q What do the tests include?

A The SAT has three parts: critical reading, math, and writing. It includes essay, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions. The ACT has four multiple-choice sections: English, math, reading, and science. There's also an optional writing portion on the ACT (your child can check at act.org to see which colleges require or recommend it). *Note:* The SAT essay is only required by certain colleges.



Have your teenager find out whether the colleges he's applying to require it.

Q How should my high schooler get ready for these tests?

A Have her start early! As a sophomore and junior, your teen can take the preliminary SAT (PSAT). In her junior year, she might take a test-prep course at school, the library, or a community center. She can also take practice tests to familiarize herself with the format and questions. These are available online (collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat for the SAT and actstudent.org for the ACT) and in SAT or ACT manuals (available at libraries and bookstores).

Q How can I help my teen have a positive attitude toward the exam?

A Encourage him to think of the SAT or ACT as a final leg of his high school career. He should look forward to the pride and relief he'll feel when the test is over—and the results that can help him get into the college of his choice.

High School Years

Thinking Ahead to College

Fast-forward to high school graduation. Will your teenager be off to college? The time to start planning is now! Use this guide to help her choose the right high school courses, find colleges that fit her needs, and figure out how to pay for it. By sharing this information, you can start a conversation about how to make her plans a reality.



Plotting out classes

Course requirements vary by college. Your teen should work with her school counselor and check colleges she's interested in to be sure she's getting the right mix, but at a minimum she'll need:



- Four years of language arts
- Three to four years of math, including algebra I, algebra II, and geometry (which are covered on college

entrance exams), and higher-level math like calculus or statistics for engineering or pre-med majors

- Three to four years of science, plus physics or other higher-level science for engineering or pre-med programs
- Two to three years of social studies
- Two to three years of the same foreign language
- At least one semester of arts, such as painting, dance, music, or drama

→ **What about AP?** Taking advanced placement classes or dual enrollment courses (offered jointly by a high school and a college) can give your teen a leg up. While the college your child attends may or may not award credit for these classes, challenging herself will build knowledge and make her applications stronger.

Reaching beyond the classroom

In addition to strong academic records, colleges look for well-rounded students. Suggest activities like these.

● **Extracurriculars.** Being involved gives your high schooler a chance to develop interests and to be a team player. This is true whether he's in the school environmental club, plays a sport, or joins a local singing group. *Tip:* Colleges prefer a long-term commitment to one or two activities, rather than hopping from one to another.

● **Community service.**

Focusing on a cause will show that your teen is passionate and persistent, as well as a good citizen. Suggest he find ways to help on issues that matter to him.



Say he's interested in literacy. He might start by reading to little ones at the library and eventually hold a book drive to benefit needy children.

● **Employment.** A part-time job demonstrates responsibility and will help your high schooler earn spending money for now or for college. Encourage him to land an after-school or summer job that fits his schedule and talents. The longer he holds the job, the better for both his skill-building and his college applications.

→ **Show leadership.** Colleges like to see applicants who have held leadership roles. Your teenager can do this by running for club officer, playing a key role on a community service project, or earning more responsible positions at work.

continued

High School Years

Choosing a college

With thousands of schools to choose from, your teen will be able to find a great fit. These steps can help.

- **Decide what's important.** Together, make a list of what to consider, such as: programs offered, distance from home, city vs. rural campus, size of student body, sports programs, Greek life—and cost. *Idea:* Have her make a spreadsheet with those factors across the top. As she considers colleges, she can enter the information for each.



- **Make a list.** Encourage her to read college guides, visit school websites, talk to college students, attend college fairs, and go to information sessions at her high school. Schedule tours at nearby colleges—even if they're not the ones she's planning to apply to—so she can get a feel for different types of campuses. Then, try to visit ones she is serious about. Seeing campuses in person allows your teen to decide which one is the best fit for her.

- **Narrow it down.** Experts suggest applying to two or three schools from each of three categories: “reach” schools (harder to get into), “match” schools (a good chance), and “safety” schools (likely to be accepted). *Note:* Check with your school counselor or with colleges to see if she qualifies for waivers of the application fees.

→ **Apply early decision?** Sometimes a student is sure where she wants to go—and showing that commitment may give her a better shot at getting in. This can be a good option for some kids. But it's not a great choice if your child needs financial aid. If accepted, she won't be able to compare financial aid offers from other schools.



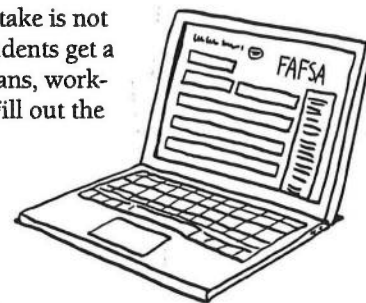
Paying for it

Tuition, room, board, books, and fees add up to a huge investment. Here are ways to get the ball rolling on financing college.

- **Start the discussion.** One of the best things you can do is to talk honestly with your teen about how much you will contribute (if anything). Knowing the financial situation up front will help him make the best decision.

- **Look at options.** One idea for keeping costs down: Attend community college and live at home for two years. Or he might go to college nearby and live at home all four years. If he's interested in more expensive colleges, don't rule them out at this point—those schools may award more aid than your state schools do.

- **Apply!** The biggest mistake is not applying for aid. Most students get a combination of grants, loans, work-study, and scholarships. Fill out the FAFSA financial aid form (fafsa.ed.gov) as early as possible after October 1 in your child's senior year, as money may be awarded first come, first served. He'll be notified of financial aid packages after he's accepted.



- **Search for scholarships.** Beyond aid that colleges give, millions of dollars in scholarships are out there. Find options through scholarship apps like *Scholly* or websites (bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search). Look for money earmarked for students like him, perhaps for trumpet players, first-generation college students, or someone with a specific medical condition. Or he might be eligible for scholarships from your employer or religious group.

→ **Be loan smart.** Review interest rates and repayment terms before signing. Also, consider the salaries for careers he's interested in vs. the monthly payments he'll have to cover. *Tip:* By choosing certain jobs, such as teaching in low-income schools for at least five years, he might not have to pay back the full amount (see studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation).

High School Years