

What can I do now to help my child prepare for high school and college?



It is very important to prepare your child for high school and college. The more prepared your child is, the better chance he/she will have to succeed in school. Listed below are some tips that can assist you in getting your child ready for college:

- **Motivate your child.** Make sure your child stays motivated to succeed in school. Giving your child positive feedback and complimenting him/her on challenges and successes will encourage him/her to continue learning and doing well in school. Ask your child about his/her future goals and discuss the important role that education plays in obtaining these goals.
- **Challenge your child.** Make sure that your child is academically challenged. Students who are challenged by their schoolwork tend to perform better in school. Challenging your child is not just the responsibility of your child's school. Parents and teachers are partners in the academic success of children. To ensure that your child is academically challenged outside of the classroom, you may want to enroll him/her in an academic after-school program, get tutorial services, require your child to read or write in addition to his/her regular school assignments, encourage him/her to play educational games, and/or expose him/her to a variety of learning experiences.
- **Enroll your child in extracurricular activities.** Colleges look for students who are well-rounded both inside and outside of the classroom. Extracurricular activities display your child's different interests and dedication to the community, while also offering exposure to a variety of mentors and learning experiences. In addition, these activities help your child to develop important friendships and leadership skills that will help in his/her ability to adapt to new environments in high school and college.
- **Make sure that your child is taking the right classes.** Children should be enrolled in the following core subjects every year: math, science, English, and social studies. Your child should also take additional classes that will expand his/her knowledge in such subjects as foreign language, visual and performing arts, computers, and world cultures. Make sure that your child is taking courses that challenge him/her and consistently developing essential academic and social skills.
- **Make education a realistic journey.** Discuss the importance of education with your child. Help your child make connections between what he/she is learning in school and how it applies to daily life.
- **Make education a top priority.** Discuss why education should be a top priority with your child. Do not allow him/her to put off completing his/her homework. Review homework assignments together, including those returned by teachers. Establish a routine time and place for your child to study and work on educational assignments. Provide all of the necessary resources and tools that your child needs to succeed academically. Examples of these resources include pens, pencils, calculators, dictionary/thesaurus, paper, and the like.
- **Discuss careers and educational opportunities with your child.** Ask your child what he/she wants to be when he/she grows up. Encourage your child to research different careers. Discuss a plan for achieving career goals. Help your child develop this plan by informing him/her of the steps needed to achieve these goals. Expose your child to educational opportunities that exist after high school.
- **Expose your child to college.** Talk to your child about college. Visit colleges together and participate in activities that are held on local college campuses. This exposure will help to motivate your child to get to know what college is all about.
- **Learn about financial aid and start saving.** Make a point to learn about the financial aid process and the various financial aid opportunities that are available. Research the types of financial aid that are offered. Spend some time getting familiar with the requirements and application processes. If you are able, begin saving now for your child's college education. There are also some tax-deferred savings plans that will allow you to save as little as \$40 a month for your child's education. For more information on these types of programs, visit this website:

- <http://www.scholarshare.com>
- **Be an educational supporter for your child.** You are your child's greatest supporter. Make sure that you know what is going on in your child's school and in the classroom. Keep in contact with your child's teachers as well as with school administrators. Get involved in your child's school. Be sure to immediately address any problems that you may have with your child's teachers or school personnel. Monitor whether your child is continuously challenged by his/her schoolwork and ensure that he/she is enrolled in the right courses.
- **Be an example for your child.** Serve as a role model. Talk with your child regularly about the value and benefit of doing well in school. Cheer your child on to meet his/her academic goals. Read in front of your child on a regular basis and attend school events.
- **Celebrate your child.** When parents regularly praise the unique qualities and successes of their children, children tend to have a higher self-esteem and perform better in school. Be sure to tell your child how much you appreciate him/her. Freely discuss your child's successes and accomplishments as well as their challenges. This type of communication will serve as a reminder to your child that he/she is capable of achieving and succeeding even during difficult times, and it will also encourage him/her to continue performing.