

COLLEGE PREP-101

Parent Checklist

- Save money for your child's college, even if you are just now starting. Many states offer tax-deferred, 529 college savings plans. Read the College Answer Guy's "Money for College"
- Visit the College Answer Guy (<http://www.collegeanswerguy.com> – "Do's and Don'ts for Parents).
- Plan ahead for college finances. Make plans for who pays for what, how your child should determine if an emergency has occurred and how/when they should request financial help.
- Discuss things with your child. Let her/him make their own decisions.
- Visit schools with your child, but let them take the lead. Let them visit again without you.
- Organize other parents to meet about your children going to college (sort of a support group), whether formally or informally.
- Join the parents club at your child's college, if one is available.
- Make them (your child) do the work. Help them (particularly with remembering deadlines) but don't do it for them (applications, essays, etc.). They'll be much more invested in the process and it's results.
- Do your taxes ASAP after January 1 so you can get financial aid applications in early (submit your taxes as soon as possible - the FAFSA requires some information from your taxes, and colleges may verify what you submit on your FAFSA). Visit www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- Buy clothing (shirt, hat, etc...) supporting you child's school
- Make sure you are available to your child by text message, instant message, and email so your child can reach you, and you them, once they are at school.
- Make sure your child's cell phone has good service and support in the area of their school (that may be with a different carrier than you use at home).
- Consider a credit card for your child (one that THEY are responsible for the payments on). Also discuss how it can be used for emergencies and be clear about exactly what constitutes an emergency.

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