

A Parent's Guide to the College Preparation Process

By 2012, it is predicted there will be 6.5 million new jobs in the workplace. What's more, three-fourths of the job growth in professions that require a college degree.

For the prepared student, the opportunities are endless. We hope this timeline will be a useful tool for you and your student. The goal of this timeline is to help your student find a satisfying college major that leads to many exciting career possibilities. So let's start the process. Jump onto to the timeline to see what you and your student can do today!

Overarching goals for each year

- Talk to guidance counselors and teachers – they are a wealth of information
- Reinforce good study habits and pay attention to your student's grade point average (GPA)
- Provide a quiet place and set a time for your student to study
- Pay attention to homework, attendance and grades
- Check into academic enrichment programs (summer, weekend, and at your community college)
- Talk to friends, family and acquaintances about their careers
- Check into volunteer work opportunities
- Keep an open mind and options open
- Check different college requirements for different majors
- Check Dual Credit, Advanced Placement, College Prep and Tech Prep offerings at your High School
- Review your student's 4 year high school plan and make certain he/she has selected the most appropriate courses for the next year
- Check with your community college career center for age appropriate assessments and resources

7th Grade

- Develop confidence in your student's ability to do things for themselves
- Encourage imaginative thinking – no stereotypes or limitations
- Be a role model – instill a positive view of all types of work
- Cultivate a variety of career considerations
- Start or add to your educational savings account together

8th Grade

- Introduce career options for conversation and research
- Increase expectations for school work and added responsibilities
- Praise development of abilities and responsible behavior
- Maintain active role in supporting extra-curricular activities
- Freshman courses are usually selected in the spring of 8th grade

Freshman

- This is the start of your student's permanent transcript
- Support early work experience (though ensure your student only works a limited number of hours)

- Look for interests emerging through extra-curricular activities
- Develop independence and self awareness
- Discuss potential career choices and decisions about which classes to take in high school
- Welcome assistance from others
- Start thinking about colleges or vocational schools
- Have your student start a file with occupational information and contacts

Sophomore

- Discuss decisions and consequences regarding career choices and continuing education
- Communicate that the process of making educational and career choices is different for every person and adjustments are common along the way
- Think about work experiences and welcome assistance from mentors and role models
- Encourage relationship building – help your student start networking
- Encourage activities that develop leadership abilities and skills
- Start visiting colleges and college websites
- Investigate Financial Aid and Scholarship opportunities
- Testing Options for your student (check with your school's counselor)
 - Take the PSAT I in October (practice)
 - Take the SAT II in June
 - Take the PLAN test offered by ACT. This test includes a summary of career interests, study skills, and an estimate of the student's ACT composite score
- Update student portfolio

Junior

- Plan on attending College Night at ICC to talk to representatives from over 60 colleges (October)
- Research colleges and compile a list of admission deadlines
- Visit college websites and print fact sheets of programs being considered
- Visit as many schools as possible – schedule interviews with admission counselors, tours of campuses, financial aid, academic advisors, student living, etc. Check summer schedule
- Testing options for your student
 - SAT and ACT prep classes
 - Obtain schedules and forms for the SAT I SAT II, ACT & AP exams (check with your high school counselor)
- Ask for a preview of your student's academic record and profile – determine gaps or deficiencies
- Check with high school coaches for NCAA eligibility requirements
- Consider summer dates for job shadowing in different career fields
- Read and respond to college mail
- Compile everything in the portfolio so far and have your student pull together a resume
- Investigate transfer options from Illinois Central College

Senior

- Expect Senioritis

- Update student portfolio
- Check transcripts to make sure student has all credits needed
- Your student can take ACT and SAT again, if desired
- Double check your student's final list of colleges, requirements, and required admission items for each school
- Coordinate with your high school counselor to have transcripts and test scores sent to appropriate schools
- Double check deadlines and apply to colleges
- Keep copies of all applications
- Distribute recommendation letters to teachers with stamped and addressed envelopes
- Double check with the admissions office of each college to verify receipt of materials and check to see they have everything they need
- After January 1st, complete the Free Application for Student Financial Aid www.fafsa.ed.gov online (parent's income tax information required)
- Student should receive the Student Aid Report (SAR) w/in 4 weeks of completing the FAFSA - mail back any corrections
- Double check with the financial office of each college to verify receipt of materials and check to see they have everything they need
- Check into scholarships, work study, grants and loan options at each school (ICC scholarship deadline is April 1)
- Students generally receive college acceptance letters by April 15
- Send deposit to reserve student's spot for those colleges they are still considering (most likely this will be non-refundable)
- Notify colleges that student has eliminated to free up open spots for others
- Testing options:
 - Take any AP exams for subjects studied in High School
 - Take the ICC placement test at the High School during the spring semester
- Contact high school counselor to send student's final transcripts to the college your student will definitely be attending
- Enjoy graduation together and praise accomplishments!

Summer after graduation - off to college

- Welcome and support a new stage of independence
- Expect trial and error
- Maintain open lines of communication
- Discuss consequences, possibilities, and contingency plans for next year
- Set up a college budget with due dates
- Finalize housing plans
- Investigate computer needs and options
- Undecided students may sign up for free career exploration workshop at ICC
- Sign up for summer orientation
- Check out support services offered at college (such as the career center)
- Check on health insurance
- Set up a time management schedule for studying, activities, and fun
- Shop together for college essentials
- Remind your student to update their portfolio and resume each year at college
- Book travel plans for the next year (parent's weekend, etc.)

- Make sure your student signs up for first year college orientation and a career exploration class at their respective school

College Prep classes (suggested minimum)

4 yrs English
3 yrs Math (4 is better—your student will have take it eventually in college)
2 yrs Foreign language (some colleges require 4)
2 yrs Natural Science
2 yrs History/ Social Studies
1 yr Art
1 yr elective from above

The College Years

A miracle occurs!
Call ICC Career Services at (309) 694-5153 or email us at careerservices@icc.edu