



College and Career Planning

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When should my child begin to prepare for college and a career?

A: It is never too early to help your child prepare for college and a career. However, middle school is a great time to participate in more formal college and career-planning activities.

Q: What can I do to help my middle school child prepare for college and a career?

A: To help your child prepare for college and a career, parents should:

- discuss with your child his or her interests and abilities;
- explore careers and college majors that may be related to your child's interests;
- enroll your child in rigorous and/or advanced middle school courses that complement his or her plans after high school;
- encourage your child to develop strong study skills and maintain good grades;
- gather the facts about careers and the college admissions process; and
- share your child's college and career goals with his or her counselors and teachers.

Q: What classes should my child take in middle school?

A: Middle school students should take rigorous and/or advanced courses such as Algebra I, Geometry or World Languages, if available.

Q: My child struggles with certain subjects but really wants to go to college. What should I do?

A: Don't wait to get extra help for your child. Many schools offer tutoring by older students and/or after school academic assistance. Teachers also may offer additional help during lunch or before or after school. Parents may even want to consider having a professional tutor their child. Speak with your child's teacher or school counselor to determine what options are best for your child.

Q: What kinds of hobbies and/or activities will help my child get into college and have a successful career?

A: In addition to the types and rigor of classes taken by your child, post-secondary training programs, colleges, and universities also look at your child's extra-curricular activities and community involvement while in school. Encourage your child to join school clubs and sports teams, and participate in community activities (volunteering) he or she enjoys and that align with his or her interests.

Q: I did not complete college, how can I support my child in preparation for college and a successful career?

A: You can provide support for your child by remaining involved in his/her class selections, encouraging them to do their best and helping him or her to develop good time management and study skills. Encourage your child throughout their school career and let them know they have your full support. Ask lots of questions.

Q: I get nervous (or feel intimidated) when I have to go to my child's school. What should I do?

A: Remember that you and your child's teachers are partners. If you ever have questions or concerns, contact your child's teacher and/or counselor to make an appointment to speak or meet with them. Talk with them about issues your child may be experiencing as well as his or her college and career plans.

Q: Are graduation requirements the same for all students in the state?

A: Every high school student in North Carolina must meet state course and credit requirements in addition to any local requirements to graduate from high school. Almost all school districts require additional course credits beyond state requirements and may also have additional requirements (e.g. North Carolina Graduation Project, community service hours, etc.) as part of their local exit standards. To view the North Carolina high school graduation requirements, visit the North Carolina Department of Instruction's Graduation Requirements website at www.ncpublicschools.org/gradrequirements and click on the course and credit link. Browse this website for other materials and resources on high school graduation of benefit to parents.

Q: How are students admitted to college?

A: The college admissions process begins with entrance exams and the completion and submission of an application. Gather the facts about the college admissions process for the schools or post-secondary programs your child is interested in attending. Your child's school counselor also can help with this process.

Q: What resources are available to assist me with paying for college?

A: Scholarships, grants and loans are used to pay for college and post-secondary training programs. Parents should contact their local college or community organizations to obtain more information on ways to help pay for college. Your child's school counselor also has information readily available. Helpful websites that can provide valuable information are the Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> and the College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) <http://www.cfnc.org>.