Create a list of colleges you would like to attend.

Start saving money for your child's college education.

Participate in summer enrichment programs.

Develop good study habits and organizational skills.

Keep a file of important documents and notes (copies of report cards, lists of awards and honors, lists of volunteer activities, paid work, etc.).

Explore summer opportunities such as jobs, internships, job shadowing, volunteer work, and summer programs.

Think about career and occupational opportunities for your future.

Enroll in challenging classes, especially college preparatory courses, such as Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, and Chemistry. Consider enrolling in Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors courses.

Prep for the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), if applicable.

Think about what major you are interested in and visit colleges to explore what they have to offer before you do your college visits.

Think about what courses you need to take in high school to be ready for the college of your choice.

Meet your school counselor to discuss colleges.

Enroll in college preparatory classes such as Pre-Calculus or Calculus, Biology, Chemistry and Advanced Placement (AP) or Honors courses.

Check into pre-college summer programs.

Keep copies of everything you send to colleges, and note submission dates.

Send your high school transcript, standardized test scores, the names of your teachers who will write letters of recommendation, any required forms, and any required documents.

If you are attending a college that is less selective, you can complete your application in early October.

Do not wait until the last minute to start preparing your application materials.

Make sure you send all your materials on time.

Be sure to complete all applications by the given deadlines.

Take the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT) exam. Use prep books and software to practice. You will need to register a month before you can take the SAT or ACT exam.

Verify that transcripts and test scores are being sent to college(s) of choice.

Start a calendar with important standardized tests, admission, and financial aid dates and deadlines.

Contact colleges to ensure they have received all application materials.

Ask for letters of recommendation. Give each person your résumé and portfolio; a stamped, addressed, envelope; and any required forms. Do this at least two months before any deadlines.

Be prepared to visit each college before you make your final decision.

You will need to register a month before you can take the SAT or ACT exam.

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