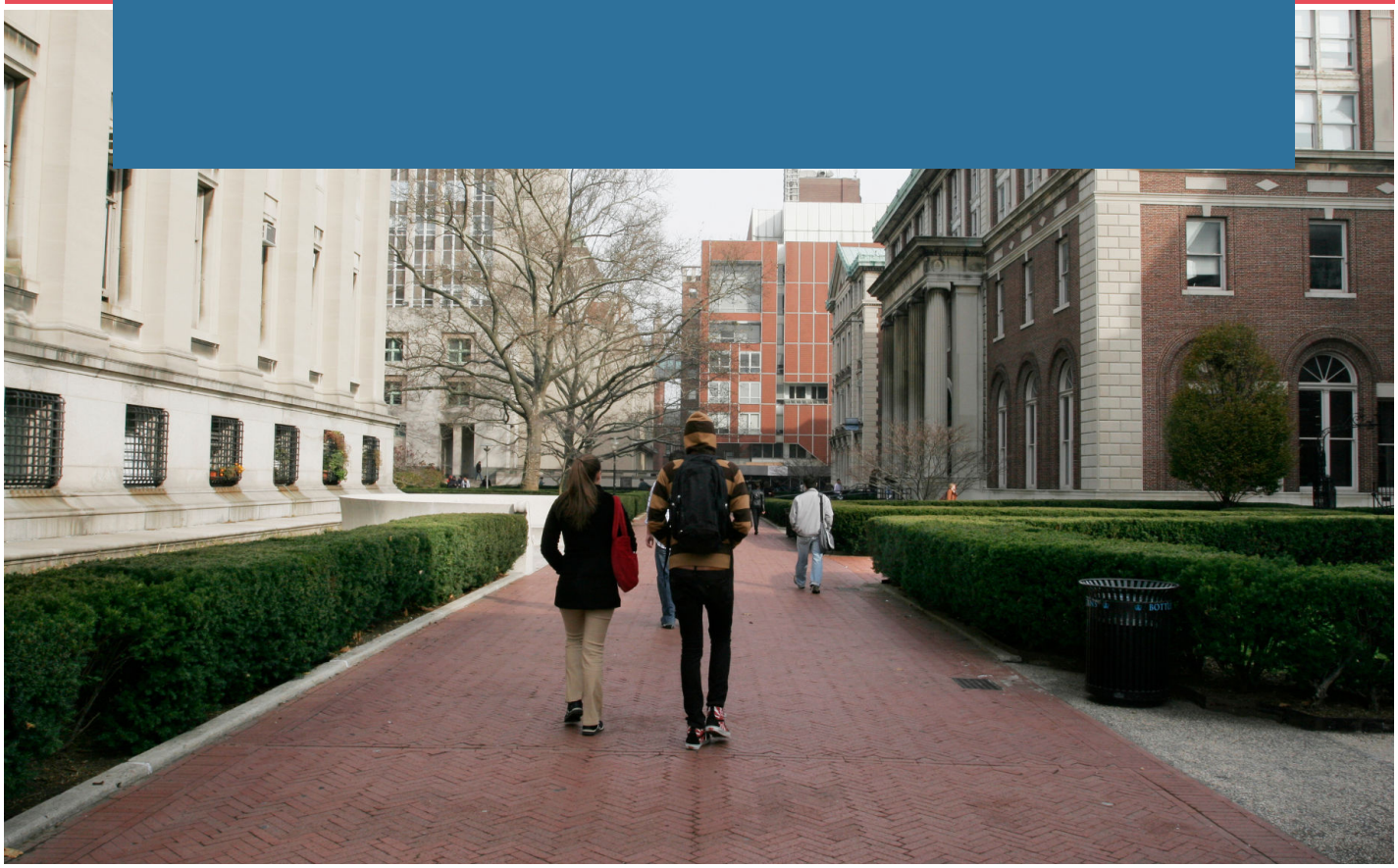
# 5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD GET READY FOR COLLEGE



COLLEGE edge
Educational Planning and Advising

Creating Successful Paths to College

Thank you for visiting our website and for downloading our college planning guide!

If you're reading this, you are probably getting ready to embark on the admissions journey with your child. We are excited for you! However, we understand that the thought of sending your child off to college can stir up a full spectrum of emotions ranging from confusion and fear to joy and pride...sometimes all in the same day.

People often ask us how they can get their child admitted to a "good" college and the truth is that we don't get any student admitted to any college - they get themselves admitted through *hard work, self-discovery, and strategic planning.* And unless you've been to college in the last ten years, it's important to know that the landscape is vastly different than when you (or we) took the journey many years ago. Lower acceptance rates at competitive colleges, changes to standardized testing, and more opportunities to qualify for specialized or accelerated degree programs mean that having a plan is more important than ever. No more random acts of applying to college!

That's where we come in. We know how to help students and families create a competitive college plan that still lets kids be kids. It's possible for students to gain admission to a "good" school however a family chooses to define that, and still have time to enjoy the activities they love. It's all about balance. As career educators and partners in your family's college journey, you can rely on College Edge to provide you with expert advice and hands-on help as you navigate the path to college.

All the best,
Alexis and Jenny

*Ready to dive in and learn more?*
*Schedule a Free Discovery Call with an advisor today:* ***https://collegeedge.as.me/discover***

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## *Help your child build strong habits of mind from an early age.*

Habits of mind are intrinsic skills and resources that students can draw upon when faced with unexpected challenges and dilemmas. Qualities such as persistence, striving for accuracy, and taking responsible risks are just a few things that make students more academically and socially flexible, confident, and successful over time. Encourage and embrace the productive struggle that students sometimes encounter and resist the urge to solve every problem for your child. It's important to keep in mind that the things we do best are often the result of countless trials and errors.

***Not sure which questions to ask your child? Here are a few of our favorites:***

- *What's your plan for getting this done?*
- *What is your next step?*
- *Wow, that was a challenge! Is there anything you wish you'd done differently?*
- *Was this the outcome you expected or hoped for?*
- *What decisions helped you the most along the way?*

## *Encourage your child to find extracurricular activities that make them happy.*

There are too many young students out there who are overscheduled and participating in countless after-school activities that don't interest them. Colleges aren't looking for students with long lists of activities they've only engaged in at a surface level. They are looking for students who know what they enjoy and who participate in those activities in deep and meaningful ways. Helping your child become a specialist in what they love the most will not only impress admissions counselors but will also teach your student an important lesson in setting boundaries and priorities.

***Conversation starters about extracurricular activities:***

- *What are you interested in?*
- *What do you love most about your current hobby/sport/activity? How could you become more involved with it?*
- *What are you doing now that you can see yourself continuing in high school or college?*
- *If you had to volunteer your time doing anything, what would it be and why?*

## *Make college a part of the conversation at home.*

Research shows that discussing college at home helps younger students adopt a college-going identity in the early years of their education, which motivates them to set goals and actively work towards achieving them. Your conversations need not be formal! Sharing fun experiences at the dinner table from your own college days, rooting for your favorite college football team, or even taking a detour through a college campus on your next road trip can make college exciting for younger students who don't need to worry about the admissions process just yet.

***Get the conversation started:***

- What would you like to study in college?
- What are you looking forward to about college?
- Are there any specific schools that you're considering? Why?
- Where would you like to go to college?

## *Focus on fit, not prestige.*

Labeling a college "good" or "not good" is a subjective process and not helpful to students. Research shows that there is no correlation between students' career success or lifetime earnings and where they go to college. If you find yourself focusing on college rankings or highly selective colleges because you think they are better institutions of learning, take a step back and make sure that you are not projecting your own values onto your child. Ask yourself: how can I help my child find the colleges that complement their unique needs and characteristics? Frank Sachs, former President of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) famously said, *"College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won."* Finding those matches takes time and a deep understanding of the qualities that make a college right for your student. At College Edge, our students have great outcomes because we engage in self-discovery before we even begin the process of making an initial college list.

***Questions that help your student make a match:***

- Do you picture yourself at a small school or a big school?
- Do you enjoy lecture-style classes or do you prefer a more hands-on approach to learning?
- Do you want to play your sport in college? Would you like to participate in Greek life?
- How important is academic prestige to you? Why or why not?

***Keep your perspective and stay grounded throughout the journey.***

The college admissions process begins years before the first application is submitted but that doesn't mean you need to curate your child's educational and life experiences beginning in grade school. This is not a competition between your child and someone else's, nor is the college your child eventually attends an assessment of how smart or talented they are. Trust us! We've worked with some pretty amazing students over the years who did the work, followed their gut, and created very successful and fulfilling lives without a diploma from a prestigious institution. The one thing common to all of them was a growth mindset and that's where you, as a parent, can play your biggest supporting role. Remember, this is your child's college admissions journey, not yours. If you focus on helping your child find the right academic, social, and financial fit, embrace their natural talents, and stay open-minded as you walk the college path together, it will be impossible to fail.

And if you need a guide, we're here to help you along the way! Whether you have an ambitious middle school student with big plans or a high school senior who is just getting started, we have actionable advice that you can use to start your journey today.

If you'd like to know more about how we can work together to help your child get ready for college, please schedule a free 20-minute Discovery Call with us:
***https://collegeedge.as.me/discover***