

## Six Best College Planning Jobs for Parents

**Of course, getting into college is the student's job. But parents can play a key role—actually several key roles.**

Some parents feel like they are on the sidelines while their child struggles through their college admissions journey. But there are many ways parents can help, even from those sidelines!

### Cheerleader-In-Chief

- **Encourage commitment.** Colleges value students who stick to an interest over the years, while showing initiative and leadership. Whether it's contributing to bake sales, car pooling, or cheering from the bleachers, parents help by supporting their child's commitment.
- **Comfort and celebrate.** Few life experiences lead to more disappointments—and more thrills—than applying to college. Parents can provide reassurance when needed and be ready with high-fives when good news rolls in.

### Chief Financial Officer

- **Know what the family can afford to pay for college.** Parents should take a hard look at family finances and figure out what they can afford to pay out of pocket for college and what they can expect their student to pay. They should keep these amounts in mind as their student considers where to apply, and later where to attend.
- **Learn how to apply for financial aid.** You won't know what financial aid you might get until you apply. At the very least, the student can get a low-interest student loan. Get to know the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the CSS Profile.
- **Understand net price.** Many colleges post heart-stopping "sticker prices," which are the total costs of college for one academic year. But the actual cost to the family is the "net price," which is the amount left after grants and scholarships are deducted.

### Travel Agent

- **Visit colleges.** No brochure or website can really show what college is like. Helping the student visit college campuses is one of the biggest gifts parents can give their child.
- **Support final campus visits.** Many students see a college in a whole new light once they have been admitted. Such a visit can make all the difference in a successful college choice, especially when choosing between colleges.

### Database Administrator

- **Learn how to research key college data.** Parents can help their student by looking up telling facts about colleges, such as whether a college has been generous with aid or has admitted students with GPAs and test scores similar to the student's.

- **Help the student stay organized.** From tracking deadlines to maintaining college lists, parents can make a major contribution to application sanity.

## Copy Editor

- **Take a look at the admissions essay.** A well-written and evocative essay impresses admission officers. Students may welcome a parent's editorial eye to check for coherence, proper grammar, and errors.

## College Parent

- **Tackle college freshman paperwork.** Soon after the confetti is swept away, forms arrive from the college. This includes forms needed to enroll the student and make the first housing and tuition payments.
- **Furnish the dorm room.** Granted, the last thing some students want is Mom or Dad involved in setting up their dorm room. But parents should offer practical advice anyway. And plan the move-in.
- **Set up the student's personal finance.** Allowances, budgets, bank accounts, and credit card use all need to be discussed and implemented.

## What's Next?

- Read [Eight Milestones on the Road to College](#) for an overview of the college planning process.
- Organize a timeline for each year of high school with Your [Get-Into-College Planning Calendar](#).
- Search for colleges and research colleges with [College Match](#).
- Learn about financial aid and other ways to finance college in the [Pay Your Way](#) section of CollegeData.
- Estimate out-of-pocket cost for any college with [The Net Price Calculator](#).



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