

## Provide Support for Your Student

At each stage of your child's life, you have been there to foster independence and help them grow. As your student starts thinking of life beyond high school, your role is to continue that support while letting them discover their own identities.

While it may seem like the vital time for college or career preparation is your student's senior year of high school, any steps you take during the first three years of high school will make that time smoother for both of you. Use this handy guideline for planning.

### Career Exploration

- ▶ Expose your child to different careers that suit their personality.
- ▶ Encourage them to look into volunteering and job shadowing and to talk with adults in fields they're interested in.
- ▶ Research careers through IHaveaPlanIowa, a free resource for education and career planning provided by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission and endorsed by the Iowa Department of Education. Go to [www.ICANsucceed.org](http://www.ICANsucceed.org) for a link.
- ▶ Help them find out everything they can about the type of career they might be interested in, including:
  - Education or training required.
  - Average pay.
  - Daily tasks and responsibilities.
  - Geographic location.
- ▶ Help your student find a part-time job, if they're thinking of getting one, that might fit with their overall career interests.

If your student wants to be a ...	Look for jobs at a ...
Biologist	County conservation office
Fashion designer	Fabric store
Graphic designer or writer	Newspaper
Marketing professional	Retail store
Veterinarian	Large farm



## College Research

- ▶ Discuss what type of postsecondary education your child might like best and what atmosphere might be most beneficial for them.
- ▶ Research colleges online, at college fairs and through campus visits to find out what schools your student may be interested in attending.
- ▶ Look at a variety of options, including:
  - Technical or vocational schools.
  - Community colleges.
  - Public universities.
  - Private colleges.
  - A combination of two or more of the above.
- ▶ Encourage your student to visit the school counselor to ensure they are enrolled in the classes they need for graduation and to pursue their educational and career interests.
- ▶ Have your student take practice ACT® and SAT® tests online, as well as either the PSAT/NMSQT® or PLAN® tests, to prepare them for the ACT and SAT tests.

## Skill Development

- ▶ As your student progresses in high school, have them look into Advanced Placement® (AP) or dual enrollment classes that will let them earn college credit.
- ▶ Encourage your student to become involved in activities, either at school or within the local community. Colleges look for well-rounded students who know how to manage their time, and it could spark an interest in a career they haven't thought of.
- ▶ Create opportunities at home for your student to work as part of the team. Family projects like planning a vacation or large improvement project or writing and sending a holiday letter can be ideal for this. Include them in:
  - Planning
  - Decision-making
  - Conflict resolution
  - Communication steps

## Financial Preparation

- ▶ Have your student start paying attention to prices in ads. Do they know how much items like furniture, cars, cell phones and laptops cost? What about services like cable, cell phone plans and utilities?
- ▶ Talk about managing money as you go about daily tasks like bill paying and shopping. Focus on budgeting, balancing a checkbook and using credit cards responsibly.
- ▶ Visit the U.S. Department of Education Web site and go through the FAFSA4caster to approximate the financial aid your student might qualify for and to create scenarios to help you plan.
- ▶ Discuss with your student how much career training or a college education costs and be clear about how much you are willing to contribute. Set up financial goals to help both of you plan.
- ▶ Begin searching for scholarships and grants. Knowing the guidelines early can affect your student's decision-making. They can also cater school writing assignments to fit the requirements of a scholarship application.
- ▶ Make sure your student knows that services like scholarship searches and financial aid form assistance are available for free online and through the ICAN College Planning Centers.