

Preparing your Child for College: Timeline

If you are a homeschooling family and your child has not yet entered high school, begin this timeline ideally at 7th Grade. If you are beginning homeschooling a child who is already in high school, read this timeline and cover the steps in the order given, no matter how old they are--the elemental foundations need to be placed **NO MATTER WHEN YOU GET STARTED.**

Seventh Grade:

- **Prepare their hearts to defend their faith.** According to a study, the "College Student Survey," asked students to indicate their current religious commitment. Comparing the responses of freshmen who checked the "born again" category with the answers they gave four years later, we find that on some campuses as high as 59 percent no longer describe themselves as "born again." That's a fallout rate of almost two-thirds!" (FAA)
- In the next 4-6 years, your student will be journeying toward adulthood and a life away from home. They will begin to be exposed more and more to people and ideas that are opposed to your Christian beliefs. Their mission field is the world –out there--! Prepare them to have their faith tested, ridiculed, and put under a microscope. Ground them in God's word. "Tie strings" of good will and trust by spending loving quality time with them, studying God's Word for the answers to all life's problems, and being a good example of faith, so that they will come to the Lord for direction, and to you for advice and shared wisdom, and not look to their world for their answers and values. **DON'T ASSUME THAT BECAUSE YOU WERE A REGULAR CHURCH MEMBER, AND USED CHRISTIAN CURRICULUM IN YOUR HOMESCHOOL THAT THEY WILL BE PREPARED. THEY WON'T BE!**
- **Begin discussing career and higher education options.** Any areas of interest they'd like to explore for their future? Give them opportunities to explore. Go on field trips, interview workers in an area of interest, etc.
- **Read!** This one activity has the power to have an enormous impact on your future. Not only will your Standardized test scores be higher, but your school subjects will benefit as well. Literature, English, Science, and History all require reading for knowledge and understanding. Reading anything can help, but aim high! You can inspire a reluctant reader by allowing them to choose books in their area of interest to begin with. Then

branch out and choose books outside of their 'comfort zone'; if you usually read Sci Fi, try a Western! Louis L'Amour and Zane Grey are well known authors. Choose solid classic literature, but also try some contemporary authors that are simply 'fun' to read. Select from a wide variety of genres, including poetry. Keep a magazine with you to keep informed on current events. **WORLD magazine** is a good choice.

- **Improve your writing skills.** Writing is the most neglected –but most important skill you will need to prepare for college! Writing frequently, even daily, is a must for college preparedness. Just start somewhere! The most important thing to remember about writing is that it is a PROCESS. Get words on paper, then follow the steps of the writing process to proofread mistakes and rewrite until your work is polished! **Don't** save good grammar and mechanics for English class, then skip them in other subjects! The more you practice a skill properly, the quicker you will improve those skills.
- **Develop good study and time management habits**
- **If your child is not already doing regular chores, start now!**
- **Get involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities**—Christian service and volunteerism not only allows us to express our love for Christ by helping others, it broadens our understanding of the world around us, helps us develop God-given skills and gifts, and redirects our focus away from ourselves.
- **Study hard, take challenging courses, and make the best grades you can.**
- **Begin a savings account for college**

Eighth Grade

- **Look ahead to high school by planning courses and doing advanced reading**
- If you haven't taken **standardized tests**, now is the time to start. Not only will it accustom your child to the process so that they will not be so nervous when it comes time to take the SAT or entrance exams, but it may also reveal "holes" in your child's education or understanding that can be filled by choosing certain curriculums or participating in community service and work to expand maturity in the coming years.
- **Continue saving for college or business opportunities**

Ninth Grade

- **Raise your academic expectations**
- **Add extracurricular and volunteer activities**—keep track of them for your records

- **Begin compiling their high school transcript.** Be sure to compute grades using the uniform grading scale. Keep samples of all of their work. Choose their best, concentrating on examples that exhibit their skills in writing, literature, and research.
- **Continue to explore career options.** God blesses each of us with different skills. Help your child to identify and develop those gifts, and encourage them to pursue educational opportunities to develop those gifts further. You may find that a four year university is not the best place to achieve those goals. If vocational school is needed, begin researching opportunities for apprenticeships and one on one training as well as Technical school certification.

Tenth Grade

- **Research college /technical school options and requirements**
- **Research financial aid**
- **Research dual credit classes**
- **Take college prep classes.** Engage a tutor, if needed, to work with your child every week in their area of weakness to provide extra help.
- **Take College Prep tests** such as the PSAT and PLAN
- **Have your child working on Adult living skills** as well as academic subjects. Personal finance, budgeting, shopping wisely, cooking, housekeeping and clothing care, and basic auto upkeep are basics that every adult should be able to perform.
- **Take a 'spiritual assessment'** to identify any areas of weakness that need extra prayer and help. Guide your child in further strengthening their faith and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, and leaning on Him to overcome sins that will trip them up in the future.

Eleventh Grade

- **Tour college campuses**
- **Research financial aid options**
- **Prepare for college entrance exams**
- **Register for dual credit classes**
- **Take the ACT or SAT--**Look at any weak areas exposed by the test and concentrate on those for review work to practice skill areas. You can always take the test again--as many times as you need!--and take the highest score from each area.
- **Continue Spiritual guidance, prayer and Bible study, Apologetics**

- **Allow your child to work** over the summer to earn money for their future and to work towards a worthy goal (mission trip, car, college expenses, etc). Earning their own money will help them learn budgeting, good stewardship skills, and generosity. It will also reduce or eliminate the sense of entitlement some teens gain as they graduate and go on to college.
- **Have your child engaged in apprenticeship opportunities for vocational skills**

Senior Year

- **Take SAT, ACT again, if necessary**--Scores can be a composite of their highest scores taken from multiple tests. If your first try was not where you'd like it to be, try again.
- **Continue taking dual credit classes if you like**
- **Apply to colleges**
- **Apply for financial aid**
- **Continue work and saving money, continue spiritual growth, continue opportunities for Christian service**

(FAA-Family Action Association); thanks to Wendy Segal