

FUTURE READY SEMINARS

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL
EXPLORING MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO STUDENT SUCCESS



COLLEGE
PLANNING



CAREER
EXPLORATION



FINANCIAL AID &
SCHOLARSHIPS



WORKFORCE
PATHWAYS



PREPARE FOR
YOUR FUTURE



EMPOWER.
DISCOVER.
ACHIEVE.



PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

High school is an important time for students to begin thinking about life after graduation. Whether your student plans to attend college, learn a trade, join the military, start a business, enter the workforce, or pursue specialized training, the decisions made during these years can help shape future opportunities and success.

THERE IS NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL PATH

Every student has different strengths, interests, goals, and learning styles. Success can look different for every family, and today's world offers more options than ever before. Exploring those options early can help students make informed and confident decisions about their future.

As a parent or guardian, your support matters. Encouraging conversations, helping your student stay organized, and exposing them to opportunities can make a lasting impact.

By graduation, students should be prepared to take their next step with confidence by becoming:

✦ COLLEGE READY

Students have the academic knowledge, study habits, and skills needed to continue their education at a:

- college or university
- community college
- technical or trade school
- certification or workforce training program

✦ CAREER READY

Students develop the professional, personal, and technical skills needed for success in the workplace, including:

- communication and teamwork
- responsibility and time management
- problem solving and critical thinking
- digital and technology skills
- career-specific training or certifications

Helping students explore their interests now can open doors later, and preparation today can create more opportunities tomorrow. I hope this guide will help you along your journey.

Dianna D. Donahue-Holley
Founder, Future Ready Seminars



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ACADEMIC PLANNING MATTERS

The courses, habits, and decisions students make during high school can affect college admissions, scholarships, career opportunities, and future training options. Encourage your student to create a plan early and review it often with a school counselor or advisor.

HELP YOUR STUDENT STAY ON TRACK

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Make sure your student is completing:

- required graduation courses
- state testing requirements
- community service or pathway requirements (if applicable)

GPA & ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Grades matter. Even after high school.

A strong GPA can impact:

- college admissions
- scholarships
- honors programs
- internships and leadership opportunities

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance builds:

- accountability
- discipline
- time management habits

Poor attendance can affect grades, credits, and future opportunities.

ENCOURAGE RIGOROUS COURSEWORK

If appropriate for your student's ability level, consider:

- Honors courses
- AP (Advanced Placement) classes
- IB (International Baccalaureate) programs
- Concurrent or dual enrollment courses

These opportunities may help students:

- earn college credit early
- save money on college tuition
- strengthen college applications
- prepare for college-level expectations

EXPLORE CAREER-FOCUSED COURSES

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs can help students gain hands-on experience in areas such as:

- healthcare
- technology
- business
- construction and skilled trades
- culinary arts
- education
- media and communications

Some programs may also offer:

- industry certifications
- internships
- workforce training opportunities

BUILD STRONG LEARNING HABITS

Encourage your student to:

- manage deadlines and assignments
- communicate with teachers
- ask for help when needed
- use technology responsibly
- practice organization and time management
- develop healthy study routines

These skills support success both inside and outside the classroom.

PARENT TIP

Stay connected with:

- teachers
- counselors
- grade portals
- school announcements
- academic planning meetings

Your involvement can help your student stay informed, prepared, and supported throughout high school.

WHY ACADEMICS MATTER

THE SKILLS STUDENTS LEARN TODAY
SUPPORT THEIR FUTURE TOMORROW

High school courses help students build more than grades and transcripts. They also help develop real-world skills needed for college, careers, and everyday life.

MATH

Math helps students learn how to:

- solve problems
- analyze information
- manage money and budgets
- work with data and technology
- think critically and logically

These skills are important in careers ranging from healthcare and business to construction and technology.

ENGLISH & COMMUNICATION

English and language arts courses help students:

- communicate clearly
- strengthen reading comprehension
- write professionally
- express ideas confidently
- understand instructions and information

Strong communication skills are valuable in every career field.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Science and technology courses encourage students to:

- ask questions
- explore how things work
- think analytically
- understand innovation and change
- adapt to new technology

Technology continues to shape nearly

every industry and workplace.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Students should learn how to:

- use technology responsibly
- research reliable information online
- communicate professionally online
- protect their digital footprint
- recognize misinformation
- use AI tools ethically and wisely

Digital skills are becoming essential for both college and career success.

PROBLEM SOLVING & ADAPTABILITY

Employers and colleges value students who can:

- think independently
- adjust to change
- work through challenges
- collaborate with others
- stay organized under pressure

These skills are developed through academics, activities, and everyday experiences.

PARENT REMINDER

Academic success is not only about making perfect grades.

Encourage progress, effort, responsibility, and a willingness to learn. Those habits often matter just as much as test scores.

ACTIVITIES & INVOLVEMENT

GETTING INVOLVED HELPS STUDENTS GROW

Activities outside the classroom can help students build confidence, discover interests and talents, strengthen leadership skills, develop responsibility and discipline, improve communication and teamwork, and feel more connected to school and community.

Colleges, employers, and scholarship programs often value students who are actively involved beyond academics.

ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENT TO EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Examples include:

- clubs and organizations
- student government
- athletics and sports
- fine arts and performing arts
- career and technical student organizations
- Community Involvement
- Students can also grow through:
 - volunteer work
 - church or youth groups
 - mentoring programs
 - local community organizations

Community involvement can help students build character, leadership, and networking skills.

CAREER EXPLORATION OPPORTUNITIES

Encourage experiences that expose students to real-world careers, such as:

- internships
- job shadowing
- apprenticeships
- summer programs
- part-time jobs

These experiences can help students:

- build resumes
- gain workplace skills
- explore career interests
- make professional connections

CREATIVE & ENTREPRENEURIAL INTERESTS

Students today can also develop valuable skills through:

- content creation
- photography or videography
- graphic design

- podcasting
- coding or gaming projects
- small businesses or side hustles
- social media management

Passion projects can help students build portfolios, confidence, and transferable skills.

BUILD PROFESSIONAL SKILLS EARLY

Encourage your student to practice:

- networking and introductions
- professional communication
- teamwork
- leadership
- public speaking
- digital professionalism

Older students may also benefit from creating:

- a resume
- a LinkedIn profile
- a portfolio of work or accomplishments

KEEP THE SCHEDULE BALANCED

Activities should support your student's growth — not overwhelm them. Help your student:

- prioritize academics
- protect time for rest and family
- avoid overcommitting
- maintain healthy routines

Balance is important for both achievement and well-being.

PARENT TIP

Instead of focusing on doing “everything,” encourage your student to commit to a few meaningful activities they genuinely enjoy and can grow from over time.



DIGITAL FOOTPRINT & SOCIAL MEDIA

YOUR STUDENT'S ONLINE PRESENCE MATTERS

Colleges, scholarship organizations, employers, and internship programs may review a student's online presence during the application or hiring process. What students post online can affect future opportunities.

HELP STUDENTS BUILD A POSITIVE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Encourage your student to:

- think before posting
- communicate respectfully online
- avoid harmful or inappropriate content
- represent themselves professionally
- understand that deleted posts may still exist online

Remind students: *The internet is often permanent.*

SOCIAL MEDIA & COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Some colleges and scholarship programs may review:

- public social media profiles
- online behavior
- comments and interactions
- digital professionalism

Positive online content can help highlight:

- leadership
- creativity
- achievements
- community involvement
- talents and interests

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Students should learn how to:

- write professional emails
- respond respectfully
- communicate clearly online
- avoid texting slang in professional settings
- follow up appropriately

These skills are important for:

- college admissions
- scholarships
- internships
- job opportunities
- networking

CREATE A PROFESSIONAL EMAIL ADDRESS

Encourage students to use an email address that includes:

- their name
- simple, professional wording

Avoid:

- inappropriate nicknames
- excessive numbers or symbols
- slang or unprofessional phrases

A professional email address creates a stronger first impression.

ONLINE SAFETY & CYBER AWARENESS

Teach students how to:

- protect passwords
- avoid scams and phishing messages
- recognize fake websites
- protect personal information online
- use privacy settings appropriately

Students should avoid sharing:

- home addresses
- school schedules
- financial information
- passwords
- private family information

AI & RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY USE

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming more common in education and the workplace. Students should learn how to:

- use AI responsibly
- verify information for accuracy
- avoid plagiarism
- think critically
- balance technology with independent learning

Technology should support learning — not replace effort or integrity.

NETWORKING & PERSONAL BRANDING

GRADE-LEVEL PLANNING CHECKLIST

9TH GRADE ▶ EXPLORE

- Build strong study habits
- Get involved in activities
- Explore career interests
- Meet with your school counselor
- Learn graduation requirements

10TH GRADE ▶ DISCOVER

- Continue strong academic performance
- Explore dual enrollment, AP, or Honors courses
- Attend a college or career fair
- Research careers and training pathways
- Consider volunteer work or summer programs

11TH GRADE ▶ PREPARE


- Take the ACT® and/or SAT®
- Create a resume
- Research colleges, careers, or training programs
- Begin scholarship searches
- Visit campuses or workforce programs

12TH GRADE ▶ LAUNCH

- Complete the FAFSA®
- Apply for colleges, training programs, or jobs
- Apply for scholarships
- Practice interviewing skills
- Finalize post-graduation plans

PARENT REMINDERS

- Keep communication open
- Encourage independence and responsibility
- Help track important deadlines
- Celebrate progress, not perfection
- Remember: There is more than one path to success



COLLEGE EXPLORATION

HELP YOUR STUDENT EXPLORE COLLEGE OPTIONS

Finding the right college is about more than choosing a school name.

Encourage your student to explore colleges based on academic programs, career goals, affordability, campus environment, student support services, and location and lifestyle fit.

TYPES OF COLLEGES & PROGRAMS

Students may consider:

- four-year colleges and universities
- community colleges
- technical or trade schools
- HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)
- online degree programs
- certification or workforce training programs

There is no single “best” path for every student.

QUESTIONS STUDENTS SHOULD ASK

Encourage your student to research:

- What majors or programs are offered?
- Is the school accredited?
- What is the graduation rate?
- What support services are available?
- What is the average class size?
- Are internships or career placement opportunities available?
- What is campus life like?
- How much will attendance realistically cost?

CONSIDER COLLEGE FIT

A good college fit may include:

- academic strengths
- learning environment
- social environment
- campus culture
- diversity and inclusion
- financial affordability
- distance from home
- available student support

Students are more likely to succeed in environments where they feel supported and connected.

SUPPORT FOR FIRST-GENERATION

STUDENTS

Some colleges offer programs specifically designed for:

- first-generation college students
- low-income students
- underrepresented students

These programs may provide:

- mentoring
- tutoring
- transition support
- financial literacy assistance
- peer support communities

EXPLORE HBCUS

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) continue to provide strong academic, cultural, leadership, and networking opportunities for students across many fields. Encourage your student to research:

- campus culture
- academic programs
- scholarship opportunities
- alumni networks
- student support services

VISIT COLLEGES WHEN POSSIBLE

Students can learn a lot through:

- campus tours
- virtual tours
- open house events
- college fairs
- admissions presentations
- speaking with current students

Even virtual exploration can help students compare options and narrow their interests.

PARENT TIP

Encourage your student to choose a college based on overall fit and future goals — not just reputation, pressure from others, or social media trends.



FINANCIAL AID

START FINANCIAL PLANNING EARLY

College, training programs, and certifications can be expensive—but many students qualify for financial aid and other forms of assistance.

Understanding financial aid options early can help families: reduce out-of-pocket costs, avoid unnecessary debt, meet important deadlines, and make informed decisions about affordability.

COMPLETE THE FAFSA

The FAFSA® (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is used to determine eligibility for:

- federal grants
- student loans
- work-study programs
- some state aid and scholarships

IMPORTANT FAFSA INFORMATION

- The FAFSA opens annually.
- Students should complete it as early as possible.
- Many schools and scholarships use FAFSA information when awarding aid.

INFORMATION YOU MAY NEED

- tax information
- Social Security numbers
- income records
- bank information
- records of untaxed income

FAFSA WEBSITE

- Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

UNDERSTAND TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

GRANTS

Grants are typically money that does not need to be repaid. Examples include:

- Pell Grants
- state grants
- institutional grants

Eligibility is often based on financial need.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships may be awarded based on:

- academics
- athletics
- leadership
- community involvement
- career interests

- artistic talent
- financial need

Encourage your student to apply for multiple scholarships throughout high school.

WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS

Federal Work-Study allows eligible students to:

- work part-time while attending school
- earn money for educational expenses
- gain workplace experience

STUDENT LOANS

Loans are borrowed money that must usually be repaid with interest.

Students and families should:

- borrow carefully
- understand repayment terms
- avoid borrowing more than necessary

Federal student loans are generally considered safer than many private loans.

ARKANSAS FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

Arkansas students may qualify for:

- state scholarships
- lottery-funded scholarships
- grants and workforce programs

SEARCH FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

CAREFULLY

Legitimate scholarships do not require students to pay application fees to receive awards.

WATCH FOR SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

Be cautious of organizations that:

- guarantee scholarship awards
- request payment upfront
- ask for sensitive financial information unnecessarily

FINANCIAL AID WORKSHEET

FINANCIAL AID ACTION TRACKER

TASK	DEADLINE	COMPLETED
Create Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID		<input type="checkbox"/>
Gather Financial Documents		<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete FAFSA®		<input type="checkbox"/>
Submit CSS Profile® (if required)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply for State Aid Programs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Review Financial Aid Offers		<input type="checkbox"/>
Accept/Decline Aid Package		<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete Loan Requirements (if applicable)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirm Tuition Payment Plan		<input type="checkbox"/>

FINANCIAL AID DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

- Student Social Security Number
- Parent/Guardian Social Security Number(s)
- Tax Returns
- W-2 Forms
- Bank Statements
- FAFSA Confirmation
- Financial Aid Award Letters
- Scholarship Award Letters
- College Login Information

	SCHOOL 1	SCHOOL 2	SCHOOL 3
Tuition	\$	\$	\$
Housing	\$	\$	\$
Scholarships	\$	\$	\$
Grants	\$	\$	\$
Loans	\$	\$	\$
Estimated Cost to Family	\$	\$	\$

SCHOLARSHIPS & PAYING FOR SCHOOL

SCHOLARSHIPS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Scholarships can help reduce student loan debt, out-of-pocket expenses, and financial stress during college or training programs. Encourage your student to apply for scholarships consistently — not just once. Small scholarships can add up.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

School counselors may have information about:

- local scholarships
- community scholarships
- memorial scholarships
- scholarships with smaller applicant pools

Students should check regularly throughout the school year.

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Many schools offer:

- merit-based scholarships
- need-based aid
- departmental scholarships
- leadership scholarships
- first-generation student programs

Encourage your student to review each school's financial aid webpage carefully.

EMPLOYERS

Some employers offer:

- tuition assistance programs
- scholarships for employees' children
- workforce education benefits

Check with:

- your employer
- local businesses
- unions or professional organizations

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Scholarships may also be available through:

- churches and faith-based organizations
- nonprofits
- civic groups
- fraternities and sororities
- chambers of commerce
- community foundations

Local scholarships are often less

competitive than national scholarships.

SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH WEBSITES

Encourage your student to create a professional email address for scholarship applications. Helpful scholarship search tools include:

- Fastweb
- Scholarships.com
- BigFuture Scholarship Search

ENCOURAGE STRONG APPLICATIONS

Scholarship applications may require:

- essays
- recommendation letters
- resumes
- transcripts
- community service records

Encourage your student to:

- proofread carefully
- follow directions exactly
- submit applications early
- keep copies of important documents

BUILD A SCHOLARSHIP FOLDER

Help your student organize:

- transcripts
- resumes
- awards and achievements
- volunteer hours
- recommendation contacts
- essay drafts
- login information and deadlines

Staying organized can make the process less stressful.

WORK-STUDY & PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Some students may qualify for Federal Work-Study programs through FAFSA.

Benefits may include:

- earning money while attending

SCHOLARSHIP TRACKER

SCHOLARSHIP NAME

DEADLINE

REQUIREMENTS

SUBMITTED?

AWARD AMOUNT

STATUS

SCHOLARSHIP NAME

DEADLINE

REQUIREMENTS

SUBMITTED?

AWARD AMOUNT

STATUS

SCHOLARSHIP NAME

DEADLINE

REQUIREMENTS

SUBMITTED?

AWARD AMOUNT

STATUS

SCHOLARSHIP NAME

DEADLINE

REQUIREMENTS

SUBMITTED?

AWARD AMOUNT

STATUS

APPLICATION PROCESS

START EARLY & STAY ORGANIZED

College, scholarship, and program applications often require multiple documents, deadlines, essays, recommendation letters, and test scores.

Encourage your student to create a system for tracking application deadlines, login information, required documents, scholarship requirements, and submission confirmations. Missing deadlines can limit opportunities.

WHAT SCHOOLS MAY CONSIDER

Admissions requirements vary by school and program. Some schools may review:

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- GPA
- course rigor
- class rank
- academic growth over time

Strong grades and challenging coursework can strengthen applications.

TEST SCORES

Some schools may request:

- ACT® scores
- SAT® scores
- AP® exam scores

Many colleges are now test-optional, but students should still research each school's requirements carefully.

TESTING RESOURCES

- ACT
- College Board (SAT & AP)

ACTIVITIES & LEADERSHIP

Schools may also consider:

- extracurricular activities
- leadership roles
- volunteer work
- employment experience
- internships
- community involvement

Quality and consistency often matter more than doing "everything."

APPLICATION ESSAYS

Many applications require personal essays or short responses. Encourage your student to:

- be authentic
- answer the prompt clearly
- share personal experiences

- proofread carefully
- avoid waiting until the last minute

Parents can:

- review essays for grammar and clarity
- offer feedback and encouragement

Avoid rewriting the essay for your student.

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

Recommendations may come from:

- teachers
- counselors
- coaches
- employers
- mentors

Encourage your student to:

- ask early
- choose people who know them well
- provide deadlines and instructions clearly
- thank recommenders afterward

Professional communication matters.

INTERVIEWS

Some colleges, scholarships, and programs may require interviews.

Students should practice:

- introductions
- eye contact
- communication skills
- answering questions confidently
- professional etiquette

Encourage students to:

- dress appropriately
- arrive on time
- research the program beforehand
- prepare thoughtful questions

PORTFOLIOS & WORK SAMPLES

Some programs may require portfolios or examples of student work. This is

APPLICATION TRACKER

SCHOOL / PROGRAM / SCHOLARSHIP

DEADLINE

LOGIN CREATED

DOCUMENTS READY?

SUBMITTED?

DECISION RECEIVED?

SCHOOL / PROGRAM / SCHOLARSHIP

DEADLINE

LOGIN CREATED

DOCUMENTS READY?

SUBMITTED?

DECISION RECEIVED?

SCHOOL / PROGRAM / SCHOLARSHIP

DEADLINE

LOGIN CREATED

DOCUMENTS READY?

SUBMITTED?

DECISION RECEIVED?

SCHOOL / PROGRAM / SCHOLARSHIP

DEADLINE

LOGIN CREATED

DOCUMENTS READY?

SUBMITTED?

DECISION RECEIVED?

CAREER PATHWAYS & ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE PATH TO SUCCESS

College is one option after high school — not the only option. Many students build successful careers through alternative pathways that match their goals, interests, learning styles, and financial situations. Encourage your student to explore multiple possibilities before making a decision.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Community colleges can provide:

- lower tuition costs
- smaller class sizes
- flexible schedules
- transfer opportunities to four-year universities
- workforce and certification programs

Students may choose community college to:

- complete general education courses
- improve academic readiness
- explore career interests
- earn an associate degree or certification

TECHNICAL & TRADE SCHOOLS

Trade and technical programs focus on hands-on career training. Programs may include:

- welding
- cosmetology
- automotive technology
- construction trades
- HVAC
- healthcare programs
- electrical work
- culinary arts

Benefits may include:

- shorter training timelines
- lower education costs
- direct workforce preparation
- strong demand in many industries

CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Some careers require certifications instead of traditional degrees. Popular certification fields include:

- healthcare
- information technology (IT)
- cybersecurity
- commercial driving (CDL)
- real estate
- manufacturing

- emergency services

Certifications can help students:

- enter the workforce faster
- gain specialized skills
- increase earning potential

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships combine:

- paid work experience
- hands-on training
- classroom instruction

Students can earn income while learning a skilled profession. Apprenticeships are available in fields such as:

- construction
- manufacturing
- healthcare
- information technology
- transportation
- electrical and plumbing trades

MILITARY SERVICE

Military service can provide:

- career training
- leadership development
- education benefits
- travel opportunities
- healthcare and housing support

Students considering military service should carefully research:

- branch options
- career fields
- enlistment requirements
- long-term commitments
- available educational benefits

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SMALL BUSINESS

Some students may be interested in:

- starting a business
- freelancing
- content creation
- creative services
- online businesses

Entrepreneurship requires:

- discipline
- problem-solving
- communication skills
- financial literacy
- adaptability

Students can begin developing entrepreneurial skills early through:

- school programs
- internships
- passion projects
- mentorship opportunities

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Workforce programs help students prepare for high-demand careers through:

- job training
- certifications
- internships
- career coaching
- placement assistance

These programs are often offered through:

- community colleges
- workforce centers
- nonprofit organizations
- technical schools

Some programs may be low-cost or free for eligible students.

ENCOURAGE INFORMED DECISIONS

Before choosing a pathway, encourage your student to consider:

- career goals
- earning potential
- training requirements
- costs and financial impact
- job outlook
- lifestyle preferences
- personal strengths and interests

No pathway guarantees success automatically. Long-term success usually comes from consistency, preparation, and continued growth.

PARENT TIP

Help your student focus on finding the right fit — not simply following the path others expect them to take.



PATHWAY EXPLORATION WORKSHEET

RATE YOUR INTEREST LEVEL

PATHWAY	NOT INTERESTED	MAYBE	INTERESTED	VERY INTERESTED
FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMMUNITY COLLEGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TECHNICAL/TRADE SCHOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
APPRENTICESHIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MILITARY SERVICE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENTERING THE WORKFORCE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

YOUR TOP 3 CAREER INTERESTS

Career #1

Why it interests you?:

Career #2

Why it interests you?:

Career #3

Why it interests you?:



CAREER EXPLORATION

HELP YOUR STUDENT EXPLORE CAREER POSSIBILITIES

Career exploration helps students better understand their interests, strengths and skills, workplace environments, education and training requirements, and future career opportunities. Students do not have to have everything figured out immediately, but early exploration can help guide future decisions.

ENCOURAGE CAREER CONVERSATIONS

Talk with your student about:

- subjects they enjoy
- hobbies and interests
- natural strengths
- work environments they may enjoy
- long-term goals and lifestyle preferences

Career interests often change over time — and that is normal.

EXPLORE DIFFERENT CAREER PATHWAYS

Students today have many options after high school, including:

- college degrees
- technical training
- apprenticeships
- military service
- workforce certification programs
- entrepreneurship
- freelance or creative careers

Success does not look the same for every student.

LEARN ABOUT SKILLED TRADES

Skilled trades continue to offer strong career opportunities in fields such as:

- construction
- electrical work
- plumbing
- welding
- HVAC
- automotive technology
- cosmetology

Many trade careers provide:

- hands-on learning
- strong earning potential
- shorter training timelines
- opportunities for entrepreneurship or business ownership

EXPLORE WORKFORCE & CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Some careers require certifications instead of four-year degrees. Examples include:

- healthcare certifications
- information technology (IT)
- cybersecurity
- commercial driving (CDL)
- real estate
- emergency services
- manufacturing and logistics

Certification programs may allow students to enter the workforce more quickly and with less student debt.

UNDERSTAND MODERN CAREER TRENDS

Today's workforce includes opportunities in:

- remote work
- digital media
- content creation
- technology and AI
- e-commerce
- freelancing
- social media marketing
- virtual assistance
- entrepreneurship

Students should also understand the importance of:

- adaptability
- lifelong learning
- technology skills
- communication and professionalism

Many careers will continue changing as technology evolves.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Hands-on experience can help students make informed career decisions.

Encourage opportunities such as:

- internships
- job shadowing
- part-time jobs
- volunteer work

PATHWAY EXPLORATION WORKSHEET

STUDENT: WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

Choose your Top 5.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping others | <input type="checkbox"/> Traveling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earning a high income | <input type="checkbox"/> Working outdoors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job stability | <input type="checkbox"/> Making an impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Work-life balance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being my own boss | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing my education |

STUDENT: A PROMISE TO YOURSELF

Check at least 3 actions that you will complete this year:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit a college campus | <input type="checkbox"/> Job shadow a professional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a college fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a career fair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research a trade school | <input type="checkbox"/> Explore scholarship opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with my school counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Research apprenticeship programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a resume | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview someone in a career I admire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Find a mentor | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a career interest assessment | |

PARENT: A PROMISE TO YOUR STUDENT

Check at least 3 actions that you will help your student complete this year:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend at least one college and career event with my student | <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with the school counselor for updates once a semester |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help track important deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Realistically discuss financial aid and scholarships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage exploration without pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrate effort and growth |



HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Parents and guardians play an important role in helping students prepare for life after high school. Students may not always say it, but encouragement, guidance, and support can make a lasting impact.

KEEP COMMUNICATION OPEN

Create space for regular conversations about:

- goals and interests
- fears or uncertainties
- career ideas
- school experiences
- future plans

Try asking open-ended questions such as:

- “What interests you most right now?”
- “What kind of work environment could you see yourself in?”
- “What are you excited or nervous about?”
- “What support do you need from me?”

Listening is just as important as advising.

ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

Help students learn how to:

- manage schedules and deadlines
- advocate for themselves
- communicate professionally
- solve problems independently
- ask questions when needed

Gradually giving students more responsibility can help prepare them for adulthood.

HELP STUDENTS STAY ORGANIZED

Support your student by helping them track:

- application deadlines
- scholarship requirements
- testing dates
- financial aid tasks
- important school events

Helpful tools may include:

- calendars
- planners
- reminder apps

- checklists
- shared family calendars

CELEBRATE PROGRESS — NOT JUST OUTCOMES

Success is not only about:

- acceptance letters
- scholarships
- perfect grades
- awards

Celebrate:

- growth
- effort
- consistency
- responsibility
- resilience
- improvement over time

Confidence grows when students feel supported throughout the process.

AVOID COMPARISONS

Every student’s path is different. Avoid comparing your student to:

- siblings
- classmates
- relatives
- social media success stories

Students develop at different speeds and may discover their direction at different times.

ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION

Allow students space to:

- explore interests
- ask questions
- change their minds
- discover new opportunities
- learn through experience

Career goals often evolve over time.

SUPPORT MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING





BALANCE & WELLNESS

STUDENT SUCCESS REQUIRES BALANCE

Preparing for the future is important, but students also need time to rest, recharge, and care for their mental and emotional well-being. A packed schedule does not always equal success.

WATCH FOR BURNOUT

Students may feel overwhelmed by:

- academics
- sports and activities
- social pressure
- family expectations
- jobs or responsibilities outside of school
- constant online comparison

Signs of burnout may include:

- exhaustion
- irritability
- lack of motivation
- falling grades
- withdrawing from others
- increased anxiety or stress

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY ROUTINES

Support habits that help students function at their best:

- consistent sleep
- healthy eating
- physical activity
- time management
- breaks from screens and technology
- realistic schedules

Sleep is especially important for:

- focus and memory
- emotional regulation
- academic performance
- overall health

HELP STUDENTS MANAGE STRESS

Encourage your student to:

- ask for help when needed
- communicate openly
- take breaks when overwhelmed
- practice self-care
- spend time offline
- maintain healthy friendships and support systems

Remind students that it is okay not to have everything figured out immediately.

SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL WELLNESS

Social media can be helpful for:

- networking
- creativity
- learning opportunities
- staying connected

However, students should also learn how to:

- set healthy boundaries online
- avoid unhealthy comparison
- protect their mental health
- manage screen time
- recognize unrealistic online expectations

A healthy digital balance matters.

KEEP EXPECTATIONS REALISTIC

Every student develops differently. Avoid comparing your student to: classmates

- siblings
- social media success stories
- unrealistic timelines

Growth, consistency, and effort are more important than perfection.

PARENT REMINDER

Students often need support, encouragement, and understanding more than pressure.

Creating a safe and supportive environment at home can help students feel more confident as they prepare for life after high school.

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RESOURCES & TOOLS

COLLEGE PLANNING & APPLICATIONS

COMMON APP

Apply to multiple colleges using one application. Important for admissions.

- www.CommonApp.org

COLLEGE BOARD

SAT®, AP®, college planning, and scholarship resources.

- www.CollegeBoard.com

BIGFUTURE

College, career, and scholarship planning tools for students and families. Excellent for college planning, scholarships, career exploration, and SAT info.

- www.BigFuture.collegeboard.org

COLLEGE NAVIGATOR

Research colleges, majors, tuition costs, graduation rates, and more.

- www.NCES.ed.gov/collegenavigator

HBCU INFORMATION

- www.Sites.ed.gov/whhbcu

VIRTUAL COLLEGE TOURS

- www.YouVisit.com/CollegeSearch

FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

FAFSA®

Apply for federal financial aid, grants, loans, and work-study programs

- www.StudentAid.gov

RAISEME SCHOLARSHIPS

Students can earn micro-scholarships during high school.

- www.Raise.me

CSS Profile®

Used by some colleges to determine eligibility for institutional financial aid.

- www.CSSProfile.collegeboard.org

SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH WEBSITES

Search for national, local, and merit-based scholarships.

- www.Fastweb.com
- www.Scholarships.com

CAREER EXPLORATION & WORKFORCE RESOURCES

OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

Career outlooks, salaries, job growth, and education requirements.

- www.BLS.gov/ooh

O*NET ONLINE

Explore careers, workplace skills, and career interests.

- www.OnetOnline.org

CAREERONESTOP

Career exploration, resume tools, salary information, and training resources.

- www.CareerOneStop.org

APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Explore registered apprenticeships and skilled trade careers.

- www.Apprenticeship.gov

MILITARY INFORMATION

- www.TodaysMilitary.com

TESTING RESOURCES

ACT®

Testing dates, registration, and college readiness resources.

- www.ACT.org

SAT® & AP® INFORMATION

Registration, test prep, and score information.

- www.CollegeBoard.com

ARKANSAS RESOURCES

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Scholarships, grants, financial aid, and college planning resources.

FUTURE READY SEMINARS.com

Helping families navigate:

- college planning
- career readiness
- workforce pathways
- scholarships & financial aid
- life skills & professional development
- life after high school

FUTURE READY SEMINAR OFFERS

STUDENT WORKSHOPS

Interactive sessions focused on:

- college & career readiness
- interview preparation
- communication skills
- professionalism
- leadership development
- workforce readiness

PARENT RESOURCES

Support and guidance for families

navigating:

- postsecondary planning
- financial aid
- career pathways
- scholarship preparation
- student success strategies

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Available for:

- schools
- youth organizations
- churches
- workforce programs
- community groups
- conferences & events

REMINDER FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS

There is no single path to success. The goal is not perfection — it is preparation, growth, and finding the pathway that best fits your student's future.



FUTURE READY SEMINARS

Empowering you to navigate the path that's right for you.

www.FutureReadySeminars.com

IG: @FutureReadySeminars

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