

Summer College Planning Guide for Parents

Support your teen's college journey—without the stress

Who is this for?

- **Rising Seniors:** Time to finalize choices, prep applications, and get serious.
 - **Rising Juniors:** Ideal time to explore and build a strong foundation.
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SECTION 1: Big Picture Goals by Grade

RISING SENIORS

Main Goals:

- Finalize college list
- Work on essays
- Plan campus visits
- Prep for final SAT/ACT attempt
- Organize deadlines and application materials

Summer Checklist:

- Narrow down your college list (8–12 schools)
 - Begin the Common App (opens Aug 1)
 - Draft personal statement and supplemental essays
 - Finalize resume or activities list
 - Schedule college tours or virtual visits
 - Confirm letter of recommendation requests
 - Set up a timeline for application deadlines
 - Research scholarships and note early deadlines
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RISING JUNIORS

Main Goals:

- Build academic/extracurricular record
- Begin college exploration
- Plan testing strategy

Summer Checklist:

- Reflect on interests and strengths—what excites your teen?
 - Start a “college list” Google Doc or spreadsheet
 - Visit a few local campuses casually (no pressure!)
 - Encourage reading, writing, or academic enrichment
 - Look into summer programs or volunteer opportunities
 - Talk about potential career interests or majors
 - Explore PSAT/SAT/ACT test dates for junior year
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SECTION 2: Helpful Conversations to Have This Summer

Use downtime (pool days, road trips, family dinners) to talk about:

- “What do you want your college experience to feel like?”
 - “What kind of environment helps you thrive—big school or small, urban or rural?”
 - “What worries you most about college?”
 - “What are three things you want in your future campus?”
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SECTION 3: Parent Tips & Tools

Stay organized:

Use a shared calendar to track:

- Application deadlines
- Test dates
- Campus visit plans
- Scholarship due dates

Helpful tools:

- [Big Future](#)
- [Common App](#)
- [College Scorecard](#)
- Google Sheets for college comparison

Don't forget:

Let your teen lead—but stay involved. Your job? Support, ask good questions, and keep them on schedule.

BONUS: Timeline Overview

Month	Seniors	Juniors
June	Start essays, finalize list	Explore interests, visit colleges
July	Work on applications, test prep	Research careers, enrichment activities
August	Common App opens, finalize essays	Plan fall schedule, prep for PSAT

FINAL REMINDERS

- Don't overschedule—leave room for downtime.
- Focus on progress, not perfection.
- Celebrate small wins: a finished essay draft, a successful tour, or a new college added to the list.