

Parent Tips

Tip #1: Don't ignore the small scholarships. Urge your student to apply to as many scholarships as possible. Don't overlook any simply because they're worth \$300 or \$500 – they all add up!

Tip #2: Make several copies of your student's completed FAFSA form and keep them in a convenient place. Many other college forms require the same information, calculations, research, etc. This way there will be no need to do it all over again.

Tip #3: Start building a resume for your student during his/her freshman year of high school. Note leadership positions, community service, academic honors/awards and involvement, memberships, hobbies and work experiences. Also include dates, hours involved and grades at the time of involvement. This will help you fill out applications later!

Tip #4: Start the scholarship search during the summer before your student's senior year. It is a long process visiting individual web sites, determining if your student meets the qualifications, applying, writing essays and gathering referrals. This is hard to accomplish during the last hour.

Tip #5: Know your student's guidance counselor! They have a wealth of information and your student may be hesitant to seek their advice.

Tip #6: Make a spreadsheet to keep track of all actions regarding colleges and scholarships. Categories include: names of colleges; scholarship deadlines; dates – when applied, when transcripts sent, when ACT or Compass sent; the admission fee amount; contact info; responses; etc. This lets you track your next steps and avoid missing important deadlines.

Tip #7: Put yourself in their shoes! Imagine your life is going to change and your world is going to turn upside down. YOU must leave your friends and family. Remember the excitement along with the panic you felt. Be understanding and patient with your student's mood swings and nervousness. You would feel the same way if you were in their position.

Tip #8: Do your homework! Start the college search ahead of your student and learn what college applications entail. Check out vocabulary, publications, web sites, counselors, testing, deadlines, etc. This way you can be prepared and answer any questions your student may have when they go through the process.

Tip #9: Let your student take charge of his/her future. Be a gentle coach and keep a calendar of due dates just in case.

Tip #10: Your student is not leaving home forever, and your job as an active parent is not over. Mothers and fathers are critical anchors as students go off to college.

Tip #11: Encourage your student to be active in campus activities.

Tip #12: Write, even if they don't write back! Even though 99 percent won't ever admit it, most students love news about home and family. A simple card or care package with their favorite home-baked cookies will brighten their day. There's nothing more depressing than a week of empty mailboxes.

Tip #13: Ask questions, but not too many! Your student will like the security of knowing that someone is interested in them, but will resent "I-have-a-right-to-know" questions with ulterior motives. "Between friends" communication is best to strengthen the parent-student relationship.

Tip #14: Expect change. It's natural and inevitable that your student will change through their college career. You can't stop it and you may not ever understand it, but you can accept it. Be patient.

Tip #15: Don't panic when you receive depressing phone calls or letters. When troubles like a flunked test or ended relationship become too much for your student to handle, they will turn to the people they know they can count on, YOU!

Tip #16: Visit, but not too much. Although they might not admit it, students look forward to a visit from their parents - especially if it involves dinner or a shopping trip. However, don't just drop in. Make it a planned event, so you both have something to look forward to.

Tip #17: Trust them. Your student is trying to find themselves while away at college and the best thing you can do to help is believe in them to make the right decisions and learn from their mistakes.

Tip #18: Stay informed. Knowing what is happening on campus can help parents just as much as students. You can become a valuable resource for your student to turn to when they are looking for something to do or are cramming for their midterms. Research campus/community activities on the NCC website.

Tip #19: Encourage your student to establish a good relationship with his/her academic adviser and visit them often. Advisers are there to help students stay on track and earn their degree!

Tip #20: Buy your student a grocery-store gift certificate. Even with a meal plan, it is nice to buy a few items from the grocery store too. A gift certificate ensures that the money provided will be spent on food and snacks.

Tip #21: Apply for financial aid every year, even if you think you won't get any! More than two-thirds of families qualify for financial aid.

Tip #22: Don't be afraid to call or write the financial aid office. They are there to help with any questions or problems you may have!

Tip #23: If you've saved enough money for your student's college education and have been offered subsidized or unsubsidized loans, use the loans to pay for tuition. Upon graduation, use the savings to pay off the loans; the savings will grow at a faster rate than the loans accumulate debt.

Tip #24: Students should attend all college orientation activities. It helps them become acquainted with their future environment, offices and organizations that will help them through their college career.

Tip #25: Encourage your student to visit the NCC Career Center. They can help with resume building, interview skills and more!

Tip #26: Allow your student to make the decision. Students should follow their own interests and passions. It's ok to make suggestions, but let your student be the ultimate judge.

Tip #27: Teach the value of networking – encourage your student to shadow someone in the workplace.

Tip #28: *When touring campus...* Visit around noon to get a better feel for the atmosphere.

Tip #29: *When touring campus...* Do some additional exploring on your own after the tour.

Tip #30: *When touring campus...* Check out bulletin boards for campus activities.

Tip #31: *When touring campus...* Talk to current students about the college and activities.

Tip #32: *When touring campus...* Get the name and title of all staff members you meet during the tour.

Tip #33: April 1 is the deadline to apply for NCC scholarships. Check out the scholarship opportunities on the Alumni and Community Page/Donations of the NCC website.

Tip #34: Spend time with your student to discuss time management and money management.