

Junior Year

Students:

To Do:

All Year

Explore careers and their earning potential with the Occupational Outlook Handbook search tool at <https://www.bls.gov> .

Go to college fairs and college-preparation presentations hosted by college representatives.

Fall

Take the PSAT/NMSQT. You must take the test in 11th grade to qualify for scholarships and programs associated with the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Schedule meetings with your high school guidance counselor to be sure you are developing a relationship with them as they will be a helpful resource for scholarships and recommendation letters as well as guiding you through the college selection and application process.

Begin to schedule college campus visits and consider financial aid in the selection process. Research local resources for scholarships and grants through your guidance counselor, church, employer, chamber of commerce, local business organizations or by using <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>. Avoid scams that ask for money and offer guarantees.

Spring

Register for and take exams for college admission. The standardized tests that many colleges require are the SAT, the SAT Subject Tests, and the ACT. Check with the colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require. Research shows that students typically achieve a higher score the second time they take tests; this directly impacts scholarship opportunities. It is recommended that you take these tests twice.

Use a free scholarship search to find scholarships for which you might want to apply. Some deadlines fall as early as the summer between 11th and 12th grades, so prepare now to submit applications soon.

Research and review career interests and interview people working in those fields. Formulate course curriculum for senior year.

Obtain summer employment. Experiences through employment are valued and should also be listed on your college resume.

Summer Before 12th Grade

Create a username and password called an *FSA ID* that you'll use to confirm your identity when accessing your government financial aid information and electronically signing *your* federal student aid documents. Learn about the FSA ID, and create yours at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm> . **Note: You must create your own FSA ID; if your parent creates it for you, it will cause confusion later and will slow down the financial aid application process.**

Narrow down the list of colleges you are considering attending to 8-12 schools. If you can, visit the schools that interest you.

Contact colleges to request information and applications for admission. Ask about admission requirements the financial aid process (including forms and documents required), and deadlines.

Parents:

To Do:

Create your own FSA ID if you don't have one yet at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm> . (The FSA ID is a username and password that you'll use for such purposes as signing your child's *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*.) **Note: You must create your own FSA ID. If your child creates it for you, or if you create your child's, it will cause confusion later and will slow down the financial aid application process.**

Attend college fairs with your child and talk to them about the schools he or she is considering. Ask why those schools appeal to your child, and help him or her clarify goals and priorities.

Take your child to visit college campuses, preferably when classes are in session.

Make sure your child is looking into or already has applied for scholarships.