

Tip #1

Take a Deep Breath—OK, Maybe Two Deep Breaths

First time getting a student to college? Fourth time? No matter how many times you've done it, the experience is never the same, but one thing stays consistent through it all: you're going to be okay, and so will they.

Tip #2

Be the Co-pilot on the To-Do List

Work together to list the tasks that need to be done—finding schools, understanding applications, writing essays, getting recommendations—but let your student be the one to complete them.

Tip #3

Decide the Basics

What kind of school? How far away from home? How much can your family afford? Talk about the big details so you can zero in on the best options.

Tip #4

Make Your Own Lists

Do you need information about paying for college, academic accommodations, or how to parent a child who goes to college far away? Start that research now.

Tip #5

Focus on Deadlines

Map out important deadlines for junior and senior year—for finishing essays, sending applications, submitting the FAFSA. Remember, you're a united front with a common goal; teamwork is essential to getting across the finish line.

Tip #6

Help with the Polishing

Your student writes the essay, but you can proofread it if they ask. You can also make sure they didn't forget something important on a resume. The path to independence doesn't mean they don't need your advice.

Tip #7

Show Them Resources

Schools offer tons of resources ranging from academic help and campus shuttles to emotional support. Students just need to know they're there—parents can point them in the right direction.

Tip #8

Check In

The college application process is stressful, so check in with your student. Listen to what they need. Your guidance, especially in making the final decision that's best for them, will be appreciated.

Tip #9

Talk About Independence

They're going to be juggling a lot when they get to campus: grades, social situations, trips home, working, roommates, and extracurricular activities. Help them think of ways to prioritize what's important when they're away from home. Be understanding when they slip up.

Tip #10

Celebrate

Celebrate your student's accomplishments when they make that final decision! You've all put in a lot of work to navigate the college application process. Going to college is an important milestone in your student's—and your family's—life. Commemorate your student's success.