

Tips For Reducing The Stress Of Those College Application Deadlines

from the American Counseling Association

The life of most teenagers, according to the teens, is usually full of stress. But a period of real stress for many teens is the college application process. Fortunately, there are things that can be done to make college decisions much less stressful the teen and his or her family.

Start by recognizing that making intelligent choices about college takes time. Most school counselors advise October of the student's junior year (NOT senior year) as the time to begin the college application process. However, even if that time has already passed for your student, there's still a lot that can be done to make the application process less stressful.

The place to start, whether the student is now a high school junior or senior, is by realistically evaluating what schools should be considered. And the best starting point for such decisions is with one or more honest family discussions about college costs and the family's ability to pay those costs. Is a scholarship possible? What savings are available? Will there be student loans, and who will pay them back?

The next step in narrowing the range of college choices is an honest evaluation of the student's academic abilities. What kind of grades has she or he had in high school? PSAT, SAT or ACT test scores are important to most colleges. That grade point average and test scores are important factors in deciding what schools will be a good academic fit.

Once you have a good grasp of family finances and the student's academic levels, it's time to do your research. Schedule an appointment with your student's school counselor for his or her advice on what college choices might benefit your student.

Next, check out some of the numerous college guidebooks that you can get from your local bookstore, library or possibly your school counselor. They offer profiles of colleges that include college costs, admission requirements, majors offered and much more.

Then go visit the online sites for colleges of interest, and take the time to go to college fairs or open houses being sponsored by colleges under consideration.

Yes, it's a lot of work and no, you still haven't completed the first college application. But starting early, planning realistically and investigating thoroughly will help to ensure that the right college choice is being made. And it certainly will make the final college application process much less stressful.

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