

Parent Study Guide

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SPANISH AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION RESOURCES



The Parent's Investment

Higher Education Represents An Opportunity To Get Better Jobs In The Future

College graduates who work full-time earn \$17,500 more per year compared to those with only a high school diploma.

Is College Worth It?

In addition to higher salaries on average compared to those of their peers who did not continue their studies beyond high school, this type of investment provides other benefits to your children:

1. Work Ethic

Having to take more responsibility for their own lives will help students develop a more solid work ethic.

2. Independence

Living away from home allows young people to strengthen their sense of self determination and identify their life goals.

3. Foundation

It has been amply demonstrated that the university experience creates a more solid foundation upon which to build a better life.

4. Maturity

College is an opportunity to expand their knowledge and acquire a degree of maturity.

What Are Your Options As A Parent?

You probably know several investment savings options for college, retirement and other things. But is it possible to do too much for your child?

A study conducted by Laura T. Hamilton (American Sociological Review) suggests that it is. This study revealed that the children of parents who paid too much without expecting them to contribute to the cost of their own education received lower academic grades than those who had to work in order to get at least some of what they wanted.

A Parent's Story

When Juan and Sara were getting ready to send their daughter to college, they wanted to make sure that Cristina had everything she needed. They worked multiple jobs and cut almost all their expenses to be able to finance their daughter's education.

At the end of the first semester, Cristina's grades were awful. Juan and Sara couldn't figure out why. Cristina had a rebellious attitude and refused to tell them whether she was attending classes, which she claimed were not too hard, and got upset when asked about them during winter break.

Juan and Sara had to make a very hard decision: they told Sara that she had to pay for her own extracurricular activities, snacks, etc. Cristina got angry and returned to school upset with her parents.

By the end of the second semester, however, Cristina's grades had improved enough to meet Juan and Sara's expectations. That summer, Cristina returned home as a much more mature, respectful and happy daughter.



The Education Process In The USA

College: A Necessity To Get Ahead

For parents without previous college experience, the entire process can be a bit confusing. To make things easier to understand, you can refer to this page.

College Vs. University

A college is a smaller institution that offers undergraduate degrees (B.A., B.S., A.A., etc.) and limited degree programs. A university is a larger institution that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees (psychology, sociology, criminal law, arts and sciences, history, medicine, etc.) Some colleges do offer graduate programs.

Certificate and Diploma Programs

These are different from the degree programs and much shorter (depending on the program). Many can be completed in only three months, but they do not carry as much weight as a degree. Many jobs require a four-year degree as a minimum.

Associate Degree

This degree can be obtained after two years. It is similar to undergraduate degrees in its three requisites: specialization requirement (major), general education and electives.

There Are Two Kinds Of Technical Degrees:

They are known as Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Science. (Many students choose a two-year technical degree because the tuition is considerably less for these colleges and they can later continue in other institutions.)

Undergraduate Degrees

Known as “bachelor’s degrees,” they’re typically four-year degrees, and they are required for students who want to obtain a master’s degree or a doctorate. There are two kinds of undergraduate degrees: an undergraduate degree in arts, “Bachelor of Arts” (B.A.) and an undergraduate degree in science, “Bachelor of Science” (B.S.). They usually require that the student completes 120 credit hours that cover the requisites of his/her specialization, as well as those for general education and electives.

Master’s Degree

A graduate program is done after an undergraduate program is completed. Between 30 and 60 credit hours are usually needed to obtain a master’s degree, and to write a thesis, which is a document (with the appropriate sources and citations) detailing an in-depth research project on a subject related to the field of study. There are two kinds of master’s degrees: Master in Arts (M.A.) and Master in Sciences (M.S.). Some master’s programs are considered “maximum” degrees, which is the highest possible level that a student can achieve.

Doctorate Degree

This is the highest degree possible. Before pursuing a doctorate, students must successfully pass their undergraduate and master’s degrees. Between three to six years of additional studies are generally needed, and the student will need to deliver a dissertation, which is a research study that the student must conduct him/herself, and that has not been done before. There are two types of doctorates: Research Degrees and Doctoral Degrees, as well as degrees in medicine (M.D.) or law (J.D.)



College Visit

For Parents, A College Visit Can Be Eye-Opening

Preparing for college can be an exciting time for teens, and a campus visit can give them a fairly clear idea of what life would be like as an enrolled student. While visiting any college campus, always keep in mind the following:

Admissions Office

This is where your son or daughter will get help selecting classes, registering, dropping or adding classes, receiving advice on their focus of study and much more.

Visit The Dorms

Visit the dorms and talk to the students who live there to get a better idea about what dorm life is like at this campus.

Attend a Class

If you experience firsthand how your child's classes will be, you'll be in a better position to help him/her prepare for college.

Financial Aid Office

You can get information about scholarships, subsidies and even financial aid if you request it.

Explore The Surroundings

What's around campus could be as crucial as what's in it. Take some time to explore the surrounding area.

Check Out Public Transportation

Find out about the public transportation options on and off-campus, so your child feels more comfortable if he/she decides to use it to attend school.

Read the Student Newsletter

You may also take a copy with you, as it will give you a good idea of what living there is like, its ideology and student experiences on campus.

Let Go

What you need is for your child to experience how he/she feels when you're not around. Plus, he/she might feel more comfortable without being followed everywhere by mom or dad.



Important Dates

You Have Worked Hard So Your Child Has Better Opportunities

These dates are useful to ensure that everything is in order before your child starts planning for the graduation party.

August (Of Senior Year)

This year there will be standardized tests (SAT and ACT).
The enrollment deadline is one month before the date of the test.

September

- Attend at least one college fair.
- Enroll for SAT/ACT test in the fall.

October

Submit the FAFSA.
Regardless of whether you need financial aid, it's advisable to submit this application as soon as possible.

November

Select five colleges to apply to.
Encourage your child to obtain letters of recommendation and to start writing the essay that needs to be sent along with the college application.

December

Use this month to evaluate everything your child has done or still needs to do, so everything is submitted on time.

January - February

Enrollment applications are accepted during these months.
Make sure they are all completed and submitted on time.

May

Deadline to notify the school your child has chosen.
If the institution is not appropriately notified, your child could lose his/her place in the next class.

- Make sure that your child completes all tests required by the school he/she has selected.
- Make sure that your child does not neglect his/her high school classes and grades.

