As your child settles into the high school experience, it’s a great time for him or her to take on new challenges. It’s also not too early to explore colleges, college majors and career goals. Use the list below to help make 10th grade count.

**SUMMER**

- **Visit a college campus together.** It’s a great way to get your 10th-grader excited about college. Learn more about how you and your child can prepare for a campus visit.

- **Help your sophomore explore career interests.** He or she can make a list of interests, talents and favorite activities and start matching them with occupations. Learn how students can use websites like UtahFutures and O*NET to explore careers.

- **Discuss internship opportunities with your school counselor.** Internships help students get acquainted early with career opportunities, influence what college degree they want to pursue, and set them apart from their peers on applications.

- **Get the facts about what college costs.** You may be surprised by how affordable higher education can be. Start by reading Understanding College Costs.

**FALL**

- **Set up an appointment for you and your child to meet with their school counselor and GEAR UP advisor.** Talk about college and career options, academic requirements for college admissions, discuss how to earn college credit in high school, and learn about the most-appropriate classes your child should take. Find out who the GEAR UP advisor at your school is.

- **Encourage your child to set goals for the school year.** Working toward specific goals helps your high schooler stay motivated and focused.

- **Make a plan to check in regularly about schoolwork.** Using your myDSD or MyWeber account, you can keep up with your child’s tests, papers and homework assignments, and celebrate successes and address problems as a team. Get homework tips for your child and find ways to help them overcome test anxiety and improve their academic skill set.

- **Talk about extracurricular activities.** Getting involved in GEAR UP, clubs, and other groups is a great way for your child to identify interests and feel more engaged in school. Read more about the benefits of extracurriculars, find out how to get involved in GEAR UP, and help your child create a scholarship resume.

- **Learn about tutoring options at your child’s school.** Subjects like Math, Chemistry, and English can be difficult to learn. Even the best students take advantage of tutoring. Some schools may offer tutoring online or in-person.

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Help your 10th-grader get ready to take the Utah Aspire Plus, if their school offers it to sophomores. Taking the test this year can help your child prepare for the ACT and get on track for college. Sophomores can also use their score reports to figure out which academic areas they need to work on. Learn more about the Utah Aspire Plus.

Have your child apply for the StepUp to College Costs Scholarship for 10th and 11th graders. Scholarships are an important tool for paying for college. It’s never too early to start applying for scholarships.

Discuss next year’s classes. Make sure your child will be challenging him- or herself and taking the courses college admission officers expect to see. Learn more about the high school classes that colleges look for.

Start thinking about ways to pay for college. Most families get help paying for college costs. Read 7 Things You Need to Know About Financial Aid to learn more.

Make a college wish list together. Talk with your 10th-grader about qualities he or she may want in a college in terms of location, size, majors offered and so on. Check out How to Find a College That Fits You to learn more about deciding on college must-haves.

Help your child make summer plans that include participating in GEAR UP activities. Summer is a great time to explore interests and learn new skills — and colleges look for students who pursue meaningful summer activities. Find out ways your child can stay motivated this summer and get involved in GEAR UP activities.

Encourage your sophomore to consider preparing for the ACT using their free Shmoop account (see GEAR UP advisor for login information), by taking an ACT prep course offered at their high school, and registering for the GEAR UP Summer ACT Boot Camp.

See how much you need to save for college. Use the College Savings Calculator to get an idea of where you are in terms of your savings goal.

Applying for College. Utah House Bill 144 allows qualifying undocumented students to pay the same tuition as Utah residents do at any Utah college or university. Those who meet the requirements of HB 144 must print and fill out the Non-Resident Tuition Exemption Affidavit and submit it to the admission office of the Utah college they wish to attend. Affidavits and instructions can be found on each college’s website by searching for the term “HB-144 affidavit.”

Encourage your child to take college classes in high school. Students who take and succeed in college classes such as Concurrent Enrollment (CE) or Advanced Placement (AP) can save time and money by earning college credit before graduating from high school.

Paying for College. Dreamers can apply for scholarships to help pay for college. To learn more about what scholarships are available for undocumented, DACA, and non-FAFSA eligible students, talk to your GEAR UP advisor and visit the Undocumented Student Resources web pages for Weber State University, Salt Lake Community College, University of Utah, and StepUpUtah.

Additional Resources: Dreamers Road Map, Educate Utah, My Undocumented Life

Visit weber.edu/stategearup for more information.

Adapted from The College Board family action plan 2019-2020