



Junior year usually marks a turning point. This is because for most students and families, it's when college planning activities kick into high gear. Here are some things you can do this year to support your child and give him or her the best options.

SUMMER

- **Find out a college's actual cost.** Once your 11th-grader has a list of a few colleges he or she is interested in, use [STEP UP Utah's Net Price Calculator](#) together to find out the potential for financial aid and the true out-of-pocket cost— or net price—of each college.
- **Explore financial aid options.** These include grants and scholarships, loans, and work-study programs that can help pay for college costs. Find out more about how [financial aid can make college affordable](#) and complete the [FAFSA4caster](#).
- **Help your child stay organized.** Work with your 11th-grader to make weekly or monthly to-do lists to keep on top of the tasks required to get ready for applying to colleges. For more time-management tips, see [8 Ways to Take Control of Your Time](#).

FALL

- **Set up an appointment for you and your child to meet with their school counselor and GEAR UP advisor.** This meeting is especially important this year as your 11th grader starts to engage in the college and scholarship application process. 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.
- **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.
- **Help your child prepare for the ACT Test.** This is a college placement exam that every 11th grader in Utah takes so they can get a head start on planning for college. Encourage your child to consider preparing for the ACT using their free [Shmoop](#) account (see GEAR UP advisor for login information and alternative testing options) and by taking an ACT prep course offered at their high school.
- **Attend college fairs and financial aid events.** These events allow you to meet with college representatives and get answers to questions. Your child can ask the school counselor and GEAR UP advisor how to find events at your school or in your area. Check out the [College Fair Checklist](#) for more information.
- **Encourage your child to set goals for the school year.** Working toward specific goals helps your high school student stay motivated and focused.

WINTER

- **Discuss next year's classes.** Make sure your child is challenging him- or herself — and taking the courses college admission officers expect to see. Ask about costs and deadlines for taking college classes during high school. Learn more about the [high school classes that colleges look for](#).
- **Encourage your child to take AP Exams.** If your 11th-grader takes AP or other advanced classes, have him or her talk with teachers now about taking these tests in May. Read more about the [AP Program](#).

SPRING

- **Search together for colleges that meet your child's needs.** Once you have an idea of the qualities your child is looking for in a college, help him or her enter these criteria into **College Search** to create a list of colleges to consider applying to. Search the **Utah College Directory** for specific information about colleges & universities in Utah.
- **Help your child research scholarships.** This form of financial aid provides money for college that doesn't need to be repaid. Learn more about scholarships through **GEAR UP's website** and research scholarships through various websites and **databases**.
- **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**.
- **Visit colleges together.** Make plans to check out the campuses of colleges your child is interested in. Use the **Campus Visit Checklist** to learn how to get the most out of these experiences.
- **Encourage your junior to consider retaking the ACT.** The ACT Test can be retaken several times and colleges will accept your student's highest score. Encourage your child to prepare 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.
- **Have your child complete the Scholarship Toolkit.** This toolkit will help you start your scholarship resume, which you can continue adding to throughout high school. The **Scholarship Toolkit**, especially the writing portion, will help you get ready for all the scholarship opportunities throughout their senior year.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

GEAR UP is here to assist Undocumented Students with or without Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in every way possible, and are committed to their success. You and your student should meet with your **GEAR UP advisor** regularly to find out how to apply for colleges and what scholarships are available to them, and refer to the guidelines and resources below.

- **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.