



My student is in  
**middle school.**

## What can we do **now** to be **college ready?**

### Attendance matters

- ⚙️ Being at school at least 95% of the time is proven by research to have a significant positive impact on staying on track to graduate high school.
- ⚙️ If a student must miss school for illness or other reasons, be sure to encourage them to seek out their teachers and ask how they can make up the missed class time and assignments.

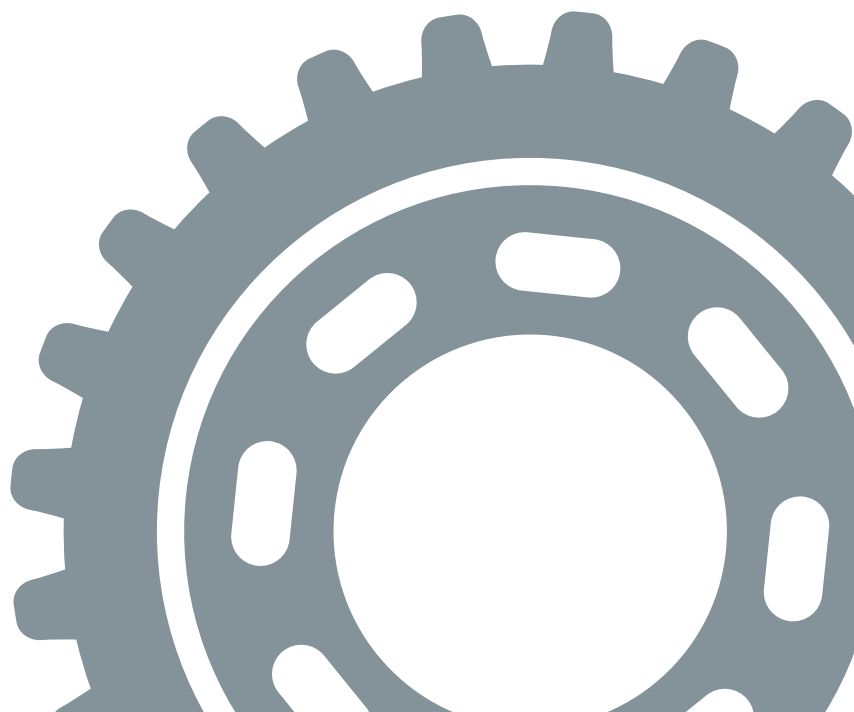
### Academic support now for rigorous courses later

- ⚙️ Encourage your student to get As and Bs in core courses so they are ready to take rigorous courses in high school. Rigorous courses are advanced, honors, AP, dual college enrollment, or any class that challenges your student to grow and reach higher – no matter where they start.
- ⚙️ Remind your student that they are the ultimate owners of their education and to take responsibility with completing and turning in assignments, studying for tests, and making smart decisions.
- ⚙️ Support your student academically by designating homework time at home, through tutoring after school and during summer programs, and by following up with teachers on student progress.

### Gain exposure to college knowledge and career requirements

- ⚙️ Go on as many college visits with GEAR UP as you can, even to places you don't anticipate your student going to – it's all a learning experience and important to be an "informed consumer."
- ⚙️ Attend GEAR UP or other COLLEGE READY informational workshops and family events.
- ⚙️ Ask around to other families with older students who have gone to college about their experiences.
- ⚙️ Explore career interest surveys and other tools to learn more about career paths available at local universities and the necessary requirements.

**COLLEGE**  
Dream It. Plan It. Do It.





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### Prepare for the transition to high school

- ⚙️ The transition starts during the 8th grade academic year, often with meetings between the student and guidance counselor to register for courses.
- ⚙️ Ask your student about the course registration process and what types of classes they are going to take, how they can challenge themselves to take rigorous courses, and remind them that the Grade Point Average (GPA) starts being calculated in the 9th grade and is used on college applications.
- ⚙️ Attend open house informational workshops at the high school, introduce yourself to teachers, and ask any and all questions.
- ⚙️ Check out the GEAR UP summer transition programs available to your student and attend GEAR UP family events designed to increase awareness about succeeding in high school.
- ⚙️ Encourage your student to get involved in extracurricular, sports, community, or volunteer groups and activities. Being a well-rounded student in high school is not only a positive way for students to develop their confidence, but it is also important in the college application process.

### Start early to plan, apply, and save for college

- ⚙️ It's never too early to be COLLEGE READY! If your student has a dream to attend a selective 4-year university, together you all can learn in the 6th grade what it takes to have a successful application and start working on the skills needed now. For example, a college application asks for a personal essay, so students can start focusing on their writing skills in middle school while building life and leadership experiences.
- ⚙️ Set up a CFNC.org account as a parent and make sure that your student has one, too. On this website, you can research colleges, see the requirements for applying, access up-to-date financial aid resources, and explore the components of saving for college through the NC 529 plan.
- ⚙️ Learn about completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and financial aid options through federal, state, and university scholarships, grants, and loans. Keep in mind that the "sticker price" of college is high – similar to buying a car – but after financial aid, nearly all students and families don't pay the full price. At 4-year universities, most students only pay about 60% of the sticker price, with private universities often able to give the biggest discounts. (Source: National Center for Education Statistics)
- ⚙️ Reach out to your school's GEAR UP Coordinator with any questions you may have, how to get involved, and offer suggestions you have on how GEAR UP can better reach families during the college-going journey.

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