



# Parent Guide – Part 3

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A few things parents should consider during their child's application process to university.

## **FOR PARENTS**

**If you are a parent and arrived at this section you will already know the sentiment we have about Rankings. If not, let me review - Rankings typically have nothing to do with quality of education. While some may argue this point, the truth is, many factors used to rank colleges are external to the classroom. I have no doubt that Harvard or Stanford are great schools. They are certainly famous. But the most important thing to remember is this - is a particular school Great for your child. We all have dreams of going to one of the top schools. But if your child is not a top, top student, chances are significant they will not be accepted. Even if they are a top, top student with perfect scores and grades, they still might not get accepted. Last year, over 50% of students not accepted to Harvard had these qualifications.**

**The real question you must truly ask yourself is what is the best school for my child based on what kind of person they are, how they work at school and their current academic standing. You cannot relive your unrealized dreams through them. As mentioned there is no such thing as a "Just Try" application to university.**

**As parents you are probably very concerned about your child's college choice. You want your daughter to have the best possible education ... that's one reason you sent her to school in the first place. There is no argument that a good education is important. But it is also important for your child to be able to start making adult decisions. This is the first time they get to choose their future. You also know your child well. You**

know their strengths and weaknesses. You see them through loving eyes. Love them, but remember your child is about to go off and experience the world. They are no longer your little girl or boy. They are becoming adults and so, they are hoping that you will guide them in the college search and application process.

It is also important to remember that your child has his or her own unique way of seeing the world built on their life experiences. They are not you and you are not them. It is time to let them go. While that is hard, you cannot let your life experiences rule how they live their lives. What your child wants is to be able to make choices. They want to have the responsibility. So nurture them. Treat them like an adult. Talk to them about your experiences, hopes and expectations. While you want the best for them, they have their own ideas about their future. Let them tell you what they want.

It is a hard balance to keep your expectations and let them choose their own path. Their college search process is not the time to put your child in a situation where they want live up to your expectations but know those expectations are not reasonable. Every parent seemingly wants their child to go to THE BEST School when in fact THE BEST School maybe the worst school for their child. The college process is the time to be realistic, well balanced and focused. You cannot live your failed dreams through your child by making them apply to a school that is beyond their means or capabilities.

It is important to remember there are no “Just Try” applications. Students today need to have the grades and scores to get in to the top

colleges. If your child does not have the numbers (i.e. grades and scores) to even be considered, think what that does to your child. First, your child has spent the last number of years of preparing for this moment. They have hopes and dreams. They are also anxious about getting into a university. Second, they have researched and found places that “Fit” their criteria. Then along comes a significant person who tells them they “Should” apply to a school that is beyond their reach. They now have the hope that they will get in because they want to please you. Then, finally, they do not get in to that school. So, not only have they worked hard in school, taken the tests, prepared the applications but also they have failed. More importantly, they think they have failed you, their parents, the folks they love the most. OUCH!

Please, please do not set your children up for failure. Instead, help them realize both your expectations and their hopes. It will all work out.

### **a. College Visits**

Chinese New Year break and summer vacation are good college visit times. Parents can take the responsibility for arranging a family trip and seeing different kinds of colleges. You don't need to see them all. It does not help anyone by only visiting one type of school or THE BEST schools. Everyone will fall in love with Ivy League schools. Be realistic. Colleges usually have students on campus the last week of August and the first week of September, a perfect time to see colleges, before classes begin at school. If you go to the campus with child, here are some things you can do while she is being interviewed or visiting with

**other students.**

**\*\* 1) Take the campus tour.**

**\*\* 2) Look at the bulletin boards.**

**\*\* 3) Ask to see a dormitory room on your tour.**

**\*\* 4) Attend a class.**

**\*\* 5) Have coffee in the student cafeteria or union.**

**\*\* 6) Notice the overall impression you get of the college. What is the community feeling on the campus?**

**When planning the trip be sure to take two things 1) a camera and 2) a laptop. Here is why. You will be visiting different kinds of schools and sometimes more than one school per day. One of the parents should be the designated photographer. As you all go around the school, take notes, take pictures etc... After the visit immediately upload the pictures to the laptop and label everything you remember. Take a few minutes to write down your impression of the school. DO NOT TALK to each other. Let everyone have some time to reflect on what they saw and heard. Then go on to the next school. Try to avoid conversation about the school you just saw. Let your impressions settle. Do the same thing at the next school. At the end of the day before dinner each person on the trip should write his or her own summary of each school visited. Over dinner talk about the visits. Bring the laptop with all the pictures so everyone has a visual of each school. Trust us when we say**

**schools begin to look a like. Pictures help keep things clear.**

**It is important to remember that what you as a parent wants will be very, very different from what your child desires on a campus visit. You will be looking to see how safe the school environment is, what the classrooms are like, what who are the most famous alumna, who are the professors etc... Your child on the other hand will be looking to see what the food is like, are the dorm rooms comfortable, how do the students dress etc... So, when you begin to talk about each school you visited, make sure you as the parent are keeping balanced in your perspective. You may love a school, they may hate it and vice versa. As always, remember you goal is to keep the conversation balanced and focused. Sometimes it will be hard to understand why your child likes a school. Perhaps they will not be able to communicate the reasoning. The school just feels "right". Respect that but also at a later date and time bring that school in to a conversation. Things will change, they always do.**

## **b. College Applications**

**Your child needs guidance in the application process but they really do want to take responsibility themselves. Look over the applications your child is working on, discuss the questions and encourage her to work well before deadlines. DO NOT WRITE THE APPLICATION OR ANY PART OF THE APPLICATION. All communications to the admissions office should come from your child. It will be to your child's disadvantage if you act more interested in the application than she does. If you get**

frustrated by the slow pace, or how calm your child appears to be about college applications, contact your school counselor. The school will have specific deadlines and will be encouraging applications to be completed by a certain time. Your job is not to nag, but to keep a schedule. For instance, every Monday at dinner, ask – “so how are your applications going? The school deadline is coming”. Also ask them if they want you to review anything or if there is information they need. If they have not asked for a credit card number by the deadline, that is the time to get worried.

### **c. Student Responsibility**

The last word is that it is important that your child feel free to make his/her own college decision in order to gain a sense of responsibility and independence. The college selection process is tough. It builds character. And heaven knows our students will need these traits and character to succeed in their first year away from home - your child's first year at college. So give them the responsibility and let them earn their own place in the college that fits them.

## **FINAL NOTES**

We hope you have found this guide helpful. It does not explain every little thing you need to know. It is meant to be a guide, a guide to help you understand the basic information and requirements. At times it is repetitive because we really, really want to make a point.

**Following the guide is a vocabulary list to explain some of the words or concepts used throughout this guide. There are also words you will find as you read materials from, visit colleges or talk to college representatives. It is not a definitive list but you should find it helpful.**

**It is very important that if you have any questions seek the advice of a professional. Many people rely on nonprofessionals for information and that is how bad rumors get around. So, ask questions of your college advisor, a college representative.**

**Finally, it is very important to keep organized. Make a calendar of important dates. Make a schedule that you will follow to complete essays and applications. Don't wait until the last minute to start the process. Give the college admission process the respect it deserves.**

**Good luck and remember, this should be fun and interesting**



