



Parents' College Toolkit

How to Guide Your Middle and High School Students Toward College: What Parents Need to Know



From the Office of GEAR UP Kentucky
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Prepared by:

The **Collaborative**
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What is GEAR UP?

GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. It is a program of the United States Department of Education that aims to get more students into college. The program teaches middle school students that it's important to work hard in school, and to go to college. GEAR UP works with middle and high schools to guide and tutor students, to make class work more challenging, and to let students try out college work. The program also helps families by giving them information about college admission and financial aid. In Kentucky, GEAR UP focuses on five main areas.



GEAR UP Kentucky Priorities

Priority #1	Awareness	Giving students counseling and information about the importance of college, getting ready for college, what they need to do to get into college, the cost of college and financial aid
Priority #2	Rigor	Making sure that all students can take the most challenging classes; improving teaching; and improving instruction
Priority #3	Engagement	Getting parents to expect students to do excellent work, and giving parents information about getting ready for college
Priority #4	Access	Giving parents information about financial aid for college, and making sure that all students can go to college, even if they can't pay for it
Priority #5	Support	Making sure that students don't fail, by helping them with school work and other issues

What is the Council on Postsecondary Education?

The Council on Postsecondary Education runs GEAR UP Kentucky, in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education. The Council is in charge of higher education in Kentucky. The Council also works with Kentucky K-12 schools to make sure that students are ready and able to continue their education after high school. The Council's public agenda is called "Five Questions – One Mission; Better Lives for Kentucky's People." The questions also make GEAR UP's goals clear:

- Are more Kentuckians ready for education after high school?
- Can Kentucky citizens afford to pay for education after high school?
- Do more Kentuckians have certificates and degrees earned after high school?
- Are college graduates more ready for life and work in Kentucky?
- Does more education after high school improve Kentucky's economy, and life for its people and communities?

What is the Purpose of the Parents' College Toolkit?

The purpose of the Toolkit is to give information to parents so that they can help their children get ready to go to college. The toolkit includes facts, places to find more information, advice from other parents, and a DVD on going to college.



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Parent to Parent: Speaking of College. . .



- ◆ **No one helps your child the way you do. You know if your child graduates from college, he or she will be on the way to a bright future.**
- ◆ **But you have questions. Will your child want to go to college? Your son or daughter may be the first in your family to go to college. Will your child be ready for college? Will your child be able to pay for college?**
- ◆ **There are different ways to get a college education. At a community, technical or junior college, it takes 1 or 2 years to earn a degree. At other colleges and universities, it takes 4 years or more.**
- ◆ **This booklet, and the brochures and DVD that come with it, will help you get your child ready for college. You will also learn how to work with your child's teachers and school counselors to get your child ready.**
- ◆ **If your child is in middle school, it's a great time to think about college. If your child is in high school, it's not too late to start!**
- ◆ **Even if your child wants to work or join the military right after high school, he or she should get ready NOW to go to college in the future.**

Turn the page to hear from other Kentucky parents who are helping their children get ready for college and a bright future.

Parent to Parent:

In Their Own Words



Teresa Dawes, Irvine, Kentucky
Children: Ages 12 & 17

“I grew up thinking that my job was to get a job, get married and have children. I was a first generation high school graduate. For me there was no option to go to college, because college was for wealthy families. I tell my children, ‘It wasn’t an option for me to go to college, and it’s not an option for you not to go.’ The advantage of going to college is not having to struggle, not having to wonder from week to week where your money’s going to come from. It’s also about esteem and doing something that you’re proud of. Education is something no one can ever take away from you. It’s yours.”



Brudus Burton, Lexington, Kentucky
Children: Ages 12 & 17

“I take my kids to where I work, where people have desk jobs, and show them, it’s your choice. If you have a degree, you can do this. If you believe it, you can achieve it. If I had a chance to do it all over again, I wish someone was there pushing me towards college. I just didn’t have the guidance. I wasn’t a bad teenager; I just had a lot of bad habits at that time. The main thing I want to express to any parent is that their child is college material. Every child is college material.”



Debbie Boian, Lexington, Kentucky
Children: Ages 12, 15, 17 & 21

“I have found personally that earning capacity is directly correlated to what your level of education is. We’re no longer in a world where you can learn a trade on the job. Most jobs require, if not a college education, at least some sort of technical training before you can even get an interview. If you’re unsure how to navigate the system, ask. Ask a neighbor, ask a friend, ask someone at church who has had a child who has recently gone to college, where you need to start.”



Kenneth Eversole, Williamsburg, Kentucky
Children: Ages 10 & 16

“The best advice I can give for a parent is go to your kids’ school and ask questions every day—what can I do to make it better for my kid. Don’t hold him back just to keep him at home. Let him go on, because, really, that’s their future and your future, because these are the kids that are going to be taking care of us when we get older. Get interested in your kid’s education. Show them it’s just as important as playing ball, fishing and hunting, because all that stuff’s great, but without education, their jobs are limited, and their life’s going to be limited.”



DeNita Wright, Louisville, Kentucky
Children: Ages 17, 18 & 27

“I grew up in the projects. That’s how I got that idea that when you get through with high school, that’s it, it’s over. There was no way I was going to go to college. Don’t ever take away that choice. Parents need to be empowered with the knowledge of college. If your child’s in high school don’t worry—it’s not too late. Get that information for yourself first, and then bring it to your child.”



Mike Jarboe, Williamsburg, Kentucky
Children: Ages 15 (twins) & 20

“I was born and raised in Whitley County. After graduating from high school, I went to work. I just wanted to get out and have my own job, and now I realize with 4 more years I could have been a lot better financially set now. Education after high school is very important because nowadays everything is so technical. Without college education or some kind of technical degree, you’re really going to be at a disadvantage.”



Jackie West, Lexington, Kentucky
Children: Ages 15, 18 & 19

“There’s all kinds of things out there that kids might be interested in. It doesn’t have to be a 4-year college. If children are thinking of going even to a 2-year college or a technical school, counselors can give you the information about what kind of courses your child should take so they would be ready for postsecondary education. Sometimes kids talking to other kids that have been through the process can be the greatest thing. Starting to learn about their field of study—that’s powerful stuff.”



Sasha Harbin, Louisville, Kentucky
Children: Ages Infant, 7, 10 & 12

“I haven’t personally finished college. That’s why I’m in a position to know how important an education is, because had I gone on and gotten my degree, it wouldn’t have taken me as long to achieve some of my goals. It’s never too early to start thinking about college. Just know that a lot of things can’t be achieved or can’t be attained unless you take that extra step, unless you go beyond the high school diploma.”



Glenn Cotterell, Williamsburg, Kentucky
Children: Ages 16 & 19

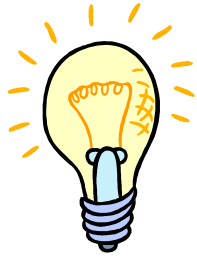
“My biggest concern has been whether or not being a small, rural school, if our children are getting what they need to compete with children from all over the state and all over the country on a college level. GEAR UP is very important, because it exposes children to a lot of other possibilities that they might not think of. The biggest advice is really to keep your grades up. It makes a difference. When you go to college, it’s all about money, and your grade average can mean a tremendous difference in scholarship money and things of that nature.”



Carolanne Evans, Irvine, Kentucky
Children: Ages 5, 7 & 11

“One semester I went to college, and it really didn’t feel right. I felt like everyone else was getting it, and I wasn’t. I think a lot of it had to do with my high school years. I never had anybody say, ‘You can do this, take these harder classes,’ and help prepare me for college. I’ve heard so many people say, ‘Me and their dad didn’t go to college and we’re doing fine.’ It’s not going to be like that when their children graduate from high school. My oldest boy said, ‘Mommy, is it going to be hard on you all financially for me to go to college?’ and I just said, ‘You don’t worry about that—we’ll find a way.’”

Notes:



The High School and College Advantage:

A Strong High School Education Turns on the Power of a College Degree

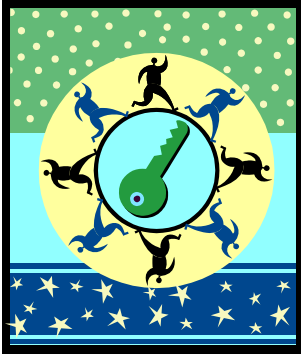
- Starting in 9th grade, a student should take classes that will help him or her get ready for college work. Your child's teachers and counselors can tell you what classes a student must take in high school to get ready for college.
- Advanced Placement ("AP")* classes in high school can help a student get a head start on college work. Students can get ready for Advanced Placement classes online for free, through Kentucky Virtual High School.
- Some Kentucky high school classes also count for college credit.
- High school classes in welding, information technology, health sciences, carpentry and other fields count for credit at Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges.
- Student activities like sports, music and community service count toward getting into college, along with grades and test scores.
- For each year that a Kentucky high school student makes at least a 2.5 grade point average (C+ average), the student can get a Kentucky Educational Excellence College Scholarship (KEES).
- There are more than 3,000 places where Kentucky students can get help paying for college. Ask for information at your child's high school. You can also get information online at GoHigher Kentucky (gohigherky.org).

*Note: "Advanced Placement" classes are different from Advance Program classes in Jefferson County and other Kentucky school districts. Ask a teacher or school counselor what your child must do to take Advanced Placement AND/OR Advance Program classes. Students take special tests to receive college credit after taking Advanced Placement classes. There is a fee for Advanced Placement tests. Ask about assistance with all test fees.

A College Degree is a WORTHwhile Investment



- By 2010 **more than 2/3 of jobs** will require at least some education after high school.
- By 2012 there will be **2 million jobs** in computer science, math and engineering. There will be **2.4 million jobs** for people who can build and run machines, or run computer systems. The people who get these jobs will have **advanced training in math and science**.
- Someone with a **2-year college degree** from a community or technical college can earn **35% more** than someone with only a high school diploma.
- Someone with a **degree from a 4-year college or university** can earn **74% more – over \$20,000 a year more** – than someone with only a high school diploma.
- Some experts say a college graduate can be paid **more than twice as much** as someone who graduates high school.
- Over 30 years, a college graduate can earn **over half a million dollars more** than someone with only a high school diploma!
- Someone with a **4-year college degree** can earn **a million dollars more over a lifetime** than a person with only a high school diploma.



What the Experts Say:

College is the Key

College leads to success:

“The...nature of the economy has changed...To a greater extent than ever before, educational attainment will determine one’s quality of life. Recent U.S. Census data indicate that there is an increasing salary gap between college and high school graduates. In 1980, college graduates earned 50 percent more than high school graduates and by 2000, that percentage increased to 111 percent.”

Project GRAD, 2005 www.projectgrad.org

Getting ready for college takes time and planning – but it gives students a chance for a better life:

“Today, young people must compete in an information-based global economy. A college education has become a critical necessity for young people to prepare for jobs that pay a living wage and to fully participate as citizens in society.”

The College Track, 2004 www.thecollege-track.com

College is worth the hard work in high school:

“...More than 80 percent of recent (high school) graduates said that if they could do high school over, they would work harder...Today, roughly 60 percent of jobs require some (education after high school); experts say this percentage will increase in the coming years. The jobs requiring the most education and offering the best pay are the fastest growing.”

American Diploma Project, Achieve, Inc. www.achieve.org

The time to start planning for college is NOW. There’s lots of help available:

“It isn’t too early to start planning and saving (for college) in elementary school... There are many support programs and organizations focused on (making sure) that all students who want to go to college can do so.”

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), 2005
www.edpartnerships.org

Resources:

Where to Get Information

Here are some helpful resources. Some give general information that will help you get your child ready for college. Others will answer your questions and help you get involved in activities that will help get your child ready for college. If you don't have a computer at home, check with your child's school or your local library.



Local Resources:

- Your child's middle and high school teachers, counselors and principals
- Your Local PTA or PTO
- Your Kentucky P-16 Council
- GoHigher Kentucky: www.gohigherky.org (Includes information on GEAR UP Kentucky)
- Morehead State University GEAR UP:
<http://www.morehead-st.edu/gearup/index.aspx?id=1646>
- Kentucky's Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership: www.cipl.org
- Partnership for Kentucky Schools: www.pfks.org
- Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority –
Financial Aid Programs for Kentucky Students: www.kheaa.com/pub_affording.html

National Resources:

- US Department of Education GEAR UP Info for Parents: www.ed.gov/parents
- US Department of Education's *Preparing Your Child for College*:
www.ed.gov/pubs/Prepare/index.html
- US Department of Education's *Think College: Learn for a Lifetime*
<http://www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/thinkcollege/edlite-index.html>
- Students.gov (US Department of Education): www.students.gov
- Educational Opportunity Centers, Inc.: www.eocinc.org
- National Council for Community and Education Partnerships: www.edpartnerships.org
- American Diploma Project, Achieve, Inc.: www.achieve.org
- *The College Track*: www.thecollege-track.com
- National Association of College Admission Counseling: www.nacacnet.org
- College Savings Plans Network: www.collegesavings.org

Multicultural Resources:

- American Indian College Fund: collegefund.org
- American Indian Higher Education Consortium: www.aihec.org
- American Institute for Managing Diversity: www.aimd.org
- Black Collegian: www.black-collegian.com
- Black Excel: The College Help Network: www.BlackExcel.org
- Department of Education/Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs:
www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA
- Gates Millennium Scholars Fund: www.gmsp.org
- Hillel: Jewish Campus Life: www.hillel.org

- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities: www.hacu.net
- Hispanic Scholarship Fund: www.hsf.net
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities: www.smart.net/~pope/hbcu/hbculist.htm
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities Links: eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/hbcu/index.html
- Journal of Blacks in Higher Education: www.jbhe.com
- Minority Scholarships and Fellowships: www.sciencewise.com/molis
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: www.naacp.org
- Quality Education for Minorities: gemnetwork.gem.org
- Tribal Colleges, Native Studies Programs, and Indian Education: www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/education.html
- United Negro College Fund: www.uncf.org/

Notes:



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