

# What's a Parent to Do?

## Frequently Asked Questions about College and Careers

**My daughter has no plans for after high school. How can I get her to think about her future?**

Instead of insisting that your daughter makes college plans or choose a career, ask her what her goals are for her life. What type of life does she want in five years? Fifteen years? Realizing that the decisions she makes now impact her future options might motivate your teen to take responsibility for her future.

Start talking to your teen about some of the career options that match her interests, income and lifestyle goals. Next, make college or other training plans that match those career goals. Keep in mind that her academic performance in high school affects her college and training options.

Lots of people dream of becoming a pro-sports player, a TV star, a critically acclaimed artist, or finding fame and fortune with some other notable career. While succeeding at a “dream job” is possible, the reality is that it’s highly improbable. Think about all the high school sports stars playing today. How many of them will make a living as a professional athlete?

Even if your son does play for the college team, he should make plans for the next 20 years, not just the next four. Ask your teen about his favorite subjects in school or his other hobbies. There are probably other career options that match his interests. Look into non-athletic scholarships for various academic, career, ethnic and other criteria. Help your teen to choose a college that has the academic programs he wants, not just the athletic programs he dreams about.

**My son is a great football player. He plans to play for a college team and hopefully get drafted by the NFL. Should I be talking to him about other career options, or just hope that he gets recruited and gets a college scholarship?**

**My daughter wants to be a welder and work in construction like her father. How do I get her to look at more appropriate jobs for girls?**

In today’s economy, there is no such thing as “women’s work” or jobs that only a man can do. This belief has caused many women to take lower-status or lower-paying jobs than men, and has led to many men entering into careers that didn’t match their interests and goals. Men and women, including your daughter, are more satisfied with their job when they choose a career they want, not the job that they think they should have based on cultural or gender stereotypes.

**My daughter has her heart set on going to Sample University, but she hasn't given much thought to what she wants to study or what type of career she wants. Is that OK?**

**Y**our daughter might have heard good things about a certain college or university, but that doesn't necessarily mean that school will be a good fit for her. Help your teen to figure out what she wants out of her college experience, and seek out colleges that match her choices.

All students should think about several academic and social factors when choosing a college, including: diversity, location, financial aid options, sports and extracurricular activities, job placement and counseling services.

**G**oing to college is an investment in your teen's future. The cost of attendance—including tuition, fees or other expenses—varies by type of school. It's true that college costs are increasing, but it's usually not as high as people think. For most Minnesotans, higher education continues to be affordable. In addition to you and your son paying for part of the college costs, most students receive some type of financial aid that is often a combination of grants and scholarships, loans and work-study. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education has a lot more information about financial aid options at: [www.GetReadyForCollege.org](http://www.GetReadyForCollege.org).

**I want my son to go to college, but I just can't afford the tuition. What are our options?**

**My daughter graduated with an Associate's degree last year but most of the jobs she is applying for require a Bachelor's. Does she have to go back for another four years of college?**

**N**o. Your daughter is probably more than half of the way toward earning a Bachelor's degree. Completing a Bachelor's program after earning an Associate's degree is common. You and your daughter should meet with the admissions department of the school she will be attending to find out if she will get credit for the classes that she's already taken. Also ask if her previous work experience can be credited toward her Bachelor's degree.