



TWENTY WAYS CCS PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THEIR COLLEGE-BOUND TEENS

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1. **Be patient.** It's hard to be a parent. I've had a son and daughter graduate from CCS and know that raising teenagers is not for the faint of heart. If you have a freshman, they are trying to get used to lots of new things and will need a couple of full weeks to get into the groove of high school life. Your sophomores and juniors might have the routine of high school down, but they are also experiencing firsts. Some sophomores are starting to drive and discovering a new level of independence. Juniors are taking challenging classes and realizing they will be applying to college next fall. If you have a senior, remember they have been to Camp College and have a timeline to follow. They have a plan and know what to do.
2. **Don't start the college process too early.** Understand the appropriate college planning timelines. I have specific timelines for each grade in my book, [College Planning, The CCS Way, 5th Edition](#).
3. **Encourage your teen's extracurricular activities while helping them lead a balanced life.** If they don't like something they've always done, it's okay to try something new. Colleges want to see meaningful involvement instead of shallow engagement.
4. **Understanding college affordability and completing financial aid paperwork.** This is an area where parents need to take the lead. This is the best tool – [MyinTuition](#) – to quickly determine college affordability and financial aid.
5. **Visit colleges indirectly and informally.** If your first- or second-year student mentions a college to you, consider going to something fun there. Maybe it's an athletic event, a play, or a speaker the college is hosting – to get on campus and check it out. You can also do a virtual tour. [You Visit College Search](#) is a great place to take virtual tours of colleges. It's also helpful to go to YouTube and search *A Day in the Life at [insert college]*.
6. **Attend school-sponsored events with your teen.** When we have College Fairs, parent meetings, Knightschool, make it a priority to attend. When you model the behavior, they will follow.

7. **Help your teen stay organized within their day-to-day high school life.** Teens struggle with organization and procrastination. Identify their pain points. Is it a lack of sleep? Is it a lack of time, or is it disorganization and procrastination? If you can identify the pain points, you can help them succeed.

8. **Stay organized with the college process and keep the train moving.** If your child hasn't invited you to join SCOIR, ensure they do. SCOIR is the college and career planning platform we use to help students research and organize the college planning process. It's a fantastic tool (*but only excellent if used!*). Remind your students to check their email Spam folder to make sure important college information isn't getting lost in the shuffle.

9. **Build resilience in your teen.** If they perceive things as failures or disappointments, help them learn how to rebound. Be the adults in their lives. After getting through the emotions, focus on the action plan. Now that this has happened, what are some things you can do about it? It's also essential to encourage them to connect with other adults at school who can give them wise counsel.

10. **Helping your teen set realistic expectations and boundaries.** Your teen can't do it all. Colleges would prefer to see your child participating in meaningful and fruitful activities instead of a buffet or sampling of activities.

11. **Empower independence in college planning, starting with the freshman year in high school.** We have four short years to train our children to prepare for the world. Every step of the high school process encourages your teen to grow and mature. It starts with encouraging your child to approach a teacher when they have a question or need help. It begins with you getting your child to handle their day-to-day things like turning in required forms and fees to the main office (and by the deadline). Later as juniors and seniors, it means having your child schedule a college visit instead of you doing it for them. If they have a question they want to ask a college, have them draft and send the email.

12. **Validate and hype up your child's LIKELY schools.** LIKELY schools are the colleges that will most likely accept your child based on grades and standardized test scores. SCOIR is a great place to see college admissions' average GPA and ACT scores. Have your child show you the scattergrams in SCOIR (*these show the admission statistics for CCS seniors since 2014*).

13. **Speak less and listen more.** It would help if you let your teens take the lead. I've learned through experience that if your senior isn't talking about college, they might not be ready to be successful in college. Ask your child, "Do you want me to just listen to you, or do you want me to offer advice?" I'd also check out pages 55-58 in [College Planning, The CCS Way, 5th Edition](#).

14. **Help your teens understand who they are within their different communities.** Maybe you observe your child is an extravert during a debate tournament but also needs quiet time at home to recharge. Perhaps you watch your child being a leader on the football team, but he struggles with asking for help in class. Maybe you find that your child prefers more of a behind-the-scenes leadership role than an official officer title. Helping your children understand how they work best will help them select the right college.
15. **Help your teen strengthen these three partnerships:** (1) relationship with you, the **parents**; (2) relationships with **adults at CCS** (teachers, small group leaders, administrators, and me); (3) relationships with **colleges and universities**.
16. **Engage in mutually agreed upon college conversations.** Your teens want to have other conversations with you besides school and college. Consider scheduling a time to talk about college planning. As a senior, maybe that's once a week. As a freshman, perhaps that's four times a year.
17. **Focus on best-fit colleges.** There are **four factors** to determine this fit: (1) **Curriculum** – does the college have the program my student wants to study; (2) **Community** - what is the vibe of the community at the college (Is it more laid back? Is it more rigorous? Is it centered around athletics?) (3) **Cost** - will you go into debt for your child to attend this college; (4) **Competition** - how likely is it that your student will be admitted.
18. **Separate your and your teen's feelings and worries.** You might want your child to attend a specific college, but your child is interested in another. Ask yourself, "Why don't I want my child to go to that college?" If you only want your child to attend a highly selective school, I'd encourage you to read the book [Where You Go Is Not Who'll You'll Be](#) by Frank Bruni.
19. **Enlist helpers.** You are not alone in this process. I have dedicated myself to knowing as much as possible about the college process. But many resources are available to help not only with the college process but your student's academic success and mental health. Does your child need a tutor? Is your child struggling with their mental health and possibly needs a counselor? You don't have to do this alone.
20. **Love unconditionally and root them in Christ.** There is so much negative stuff coming at your child from every angle. Your child has to know that you love them and, more important, that Christ loves them.