

EA College Counseling: **SUPPORTING YOUR 9TH & 10TH GRADER**



As a student begins their college admission journey, family support is critical. Explore these guiding principles from college counselors, parents, and admission professionals as you encourage and nurture your 9th or 10th grader below.



Be a **THOUGHT PARTNER.**

Help your student reflect on their values and goals. Encourage them to step out of their comfort zone and get involved in activities at school and in the community.

- Colleges look for more than just strong students - they also seek engaged campus citizens.
- Encourage exploring new interests.



Embrace **CHANGE.**

Remind your student that interests and preferences may evolve, and it's okay to change one's mind.

- The college journey should be a time of discovery and reflection.
- Encourage your student to dream.



Empower **SELF-ADVOCACY.**

Teach your student to self-advocate, communicate effectively, and express gratitude to those who support them.

- Encourage your student to build relationships and connect meaningfully with their teachers, coaches, advisors, and classmates.
- These skills will be invaluable when they apply to college and, more importantly, throughout life.



Talk Openly About **FINANCING.**

Have open conversations about the financial aspects of college. Cost will likely be critical in choosing where your student applies and eventually enrolls.

- Early and honest discussions will normalize financing college, set expectations, and can help reduce stress.
- Consult with EA's college financing counselor.



Celebrate the **WHOLE STUDENT.**

Acknowledge both strengths and challenges. Encourage risks, and understand failures are part of the learning process.

- Cultivate a mindset that embraces growth rather than perfection.
- Nurture your student's curiosity. Encourage questions and exploration at home.



Reframe **SUCCESS.**

Help your student understand that success is about personal growth, pursuing their interests, and thriving in an environment that fits their needs and values.

Success is not defined by admission to any one school.

- Remember there are many paths to success - meaningful routes are not always direct.



Focus on the **BIGGER PICTURE.**

Encourage your student to think about what type of experiences they want in college—academic, social, and extracurricular—rather than just focusing on specific colleges or locations.

- Help them identify what matters to them and where they would feel comfortable to grow and experience new ideas and people.
- In addition to researching specific majors, help your student think about the broader picture—what problems they want to solve, what work environment they envision, and how they can grow in those areas.

Right this way!
MORE ON NEXT PAGE





Encourage a Variety of **COLLEGE OPTIONS.**

When discussing potential schools, mention a mix of highly selective, moderately selective, and less selective institutions. Avoid focusing solely on elite, competitive schools. We want your student to have choices.

- Encourage and support your student to see a broad range of possibilities and gain a greater perspective.
- Set your student up for future success in college admission by giving them options.



Understand the **LANDSCAPE.**

College admission has changed. Admission practices, trends, and what a school was known for likely differs from when you applied.

- Be curious and open to learning about new schools.
- Attend college counseling events that educate about the changing landscape.



Reduce **ANXIETY.**

While uncertainty about your child's future may be unnerving, focus on building excitement for the opportunities ahead.

- Remember that EA college counselors are here to provide information and support to reduce anxiety.
- Manage your own emotions to enable you to better support and guide your child on their journey. Maintain your sense of calm by seeking advice from your student's college counselor and carefully considering your sources of information.

Learn more through your **ADMISSION JOURNEY**

Explore EA College Counseling's Resource Library, full of information for each grade.

LET'S GO!



Moving Forward...

- As you begin college visits, **visit schools that are more accessible** before exploring highly rejective schools (single-digit admit rate).
- **Check your biases** about college selectivity. When you focus only on highly rejective schools, you may inadvertently communicate that success is connected solely with admission to competitive schools.
- **Listen before offering opinions** about any particular college. Always remain open-minded.
- **Try not to compare your student's journey** to others. College admission is highly individualized and not public-facing; what works for one family may not apply to others.
- **Remember that where your student goes to college does not define them.** Instead, praise their curiosity, character, creativity, growth, empathy, and sense of purpose.

REACH OUT.

The EA College Counseling team is always here to help. If you have any questions along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out to EA college counselors!