



GETTING YOUR KIDS INTO A GREAT COLLEGE

How parents can help their kids avoid
the 5 biggest college application mistakes

We all want to help our kids master the college application process. Here's how you can avoid some of the biggest mistakes:

MISTAKE #1: Assuming someone else owns the college application process

No matter who you hire or consult, this is not the time to take a hands-off approach or trust someone else's process — even if you paid good money for it. Get actively involved and hold yourself, your kid and anyone else ACCOUNTABLE. There is simply too much riding on this.

MISTAKE #2: Doing everything yourself

Be a coach and mentor, but accept that this is your kid's journey. Going to college is a time when they are transitioning into adulthood, and one of the first adult responsibilities they should have is taking charge of the application process. Parents should not speak for their children, and definitely should not complete application materials in a student's name.

MISTAKE #3: Focusing on too few colleges

Even if your kid ultimately decides to go early decision, they should look at a larger and more diverse array of options before making a decision. Parents who try to force their child to go to a specific school will limit the student's choices and may end up unknowingly sabotaging the best route for their child.

MISTAKE #4: Waiting to think about funding

Make funding options a part of the college selection process. It would be devastating for your kid to get accepted to their dream college only to have to turn the offer down due to financial issues. Information on tuition, financial aid and loans can typically be found easily online. Consult a financial professional if necessary — and do it now rather than later.

MISTAKE #5: Unrealistic admission expectations

College admissions are hyper-competitive in today's world, and only a small number of applicants get into top colleges — despite having superlative grades, test scores and activities. Parents should encourage their kids consider a range of schools and they should make sure their kids develop an application that clearly illustrates why this particular student would be a valuable addition to the college.