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Advocating for Your First Year College Student

# Facilitator Guide

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## Table of Contents

### 3 SET-UP

- 4 Implementation and Sample Set-Ups
- 5 Resource Preparation
- 6 Additional Support

### 7 SECTION GUIDES

- 8 Welcome
- 8 Setting the Scene
- 9 Getting Started
- 9 List Your Questions
- 10 Dreams and Fears
- 11 Starting the Conversation
- 12 Exploring Careers
- 13 Selecting A College
- 13 Understanding the Options
- 14 Narrowing Down the List

- 15 Paying For College
- 16 Understanding the Cost of College
- 17 Understanding Financial Support
- 18 The Value of Family Support
- 19 Budgeting for College
- 20 What To Expect
- 21 The Transition to College
- 22 Student Life
- 23 Resources

### 24 RESOURCES

- 25 Notes & Ideas
- 26 Contact GEAR UP Idaho



## SET-UP

- 4 | Implementation and Sample Set-Ups
- 5 | Resource Preparation
- 6 | Additional Support



# Implementation and Sample Set-Ups

## Parent Workshop Series

- Provide each parent with their own take-home copy of the Parent Handbook.
- Break the parent workshop up into 2-4 days by completing 1 or 2 sections each day.
- Encourage families to go home and complete each “homework” assignment before coming to the next after-school workshop.



## Parent-Teacher Conferences

- Provide each parent with one or a few specific activities from the workshop.
- Have your college and career advisor or counselor prompt families on how to prepare for college with their student one small step at a time.
- Encourage families to complete each activity with their student at some point of the conference and/or at home.



## Parent Workshop Night

- Provide each parent with their own take-home copy of the Parent Handbook.
- Have 1-2 school staff facilitating and supporting the process of the workshop.
- Complete each section of the workshop (about 30 minutes each).



## College Fair

- Provide each parent with their own take-home copy of the Parent Handbook.
- Provide short summaries of each section and encourage families to complete the activities as part of the college fair experience.



## Resource Preparation

Each participant will need a copy of the Parent Handbook.

Print and packet together pages 4-32:

- Include each section
- Section activities
- Glossary of terms
- Notes and ideas pages

**Activity sheets and homework can also be added to the packet, but may be better printed separately and shared out at the correct stages of the workshop.**

**Note:** Consider customizing a cover or contact page for your school.

## Additional Support

As you are planning an experience for parents and families using the Parent Handbook, consider which colleges and universities students are expressing interest in. As parents and families are completing each of the activities, having their institution of interest available for specific questions can make the process that much more impressionable for participants.



# SECTION GUIDES

- 8 | Welcome
- 8 | Setting the Scene
- 9 | **Getting Started**
- 9 | List Your Questions
- 10 | Dreams and Fears
- 11 | Starting the Conversation
- 12 | Exploring Careers
- 13 | **Selecting A College**
- 13 | Understanding the Options
- 14 | Narrowing Down the List
- 15 | **Paying For College**
- 16 | Understanding the Cost of College
- 17 | Understanding Financial Support
- 18 | The Value of Family Support
- 19 | Budgeting for College
- 20 | **What To Expect**
- 21 | The Transition to College
- 22 | Student Life
- 23 | **Resources**





# Welcome

## SETTING THE SCENE

The welcome section of this workshop is an opportunity for you, the facilitator, to set the scene for your attendees. Whether you are working through the entire workshop in one day or splitting the experience by section, it is important to set the scene and expectation for your audience. The workbook has an introduction for participants, but you know your audience best. Provide an introduction that gets the audience up to speed and as prepared as they can be for this workshop experience.

Explain to the audience how you will approach this workshop. Be clear on whether this is a one-day or multiple-day workshop and how long it will take to complete this. Because the workbook has interactive steps and even take-home tasks, be sure to set that expectation as well. Consider any additional information specific to your school, students, and parents that will best prepare them for the workshop experience.

### Example introduction

*“Thank you for taking time out of your day to join me for the “Advocating for Your First Year College Student” workshop. We are all here with the same goal, which is to best understand how to support your soon-to-be college student in the first year of their college journey.”*

### Example explanation

*“This is a 2-part workshop. Today we will work through the first two sections, and next week we will complete the final two sections. This workshop has a lot of interactive pieces, and it is meant to be interactive for you. Please—ask questions, gain clarification, and know that this experience is for you! Our goal is to answer as many questions as we can to best prepare you to advocate for your student. Additionally, this workshop will have a few take-home tasks—think of this as your homework. The take-home activities will help further your understanding and skillset to best support the future college student in your life.”*



# Getting Started

## LIST YOUR QUESTIONS

The purpose of this section is to help the parents get into the mindset of being an advocate for their student. For some, this is a whole new world and it's important that you, as the facilitator, understand how to navigate the early stages of the workshop with the audience. Be sure to offer examples and support as the parents get warmed up with the process. Encourage whole-group discussion and support!

### Example Activity Introduction

*"We're going to ease into this workshop with an opportunity to reflect and get into the mindset we need to best retain the skills being shared in the first two sections. We are here together to get our questions answered and to learn how to be our students' advocates. In order to do that, we need to articulate what the questions we have Think about the college process you've experienced in your life and the college process you've not yet experienced with your own student. What questions do you have regarding the process? Go ahead and write down your questions,, and as we work through the sections, we will hopefully hit on each of the questions you have. If not, we will be sure to address any lingering questions before we are done.."*

### Example Questions

*How has college changed since I've been there?*

*What is the best way to support my students in their college years?*

*What do I do if I cannot financially support my student with their college education?*

# Getting Started

## DREAMS AND FEARS

The next section is a little more vulnerable, and it's important to understand that this could be uncomfortable for some of the parents. Encourage them to be genuine in their own workbook, and assure them that their thoughts are only shared if they elect to share them.

### Example Activity Introduction

*"In this next activity, we're going to dig a little deeper. There can be mixed emotions when it comes to watching our student take the next steps into adulthood—both exciting and terrifying! Let's get those conflicting thoughts on paper. On your page, you will see two columns. In the "Dreams" column, you are going to write down your dreams for your student related to their college experience or life in general after high school. In the "Fears" column, you're going to write down your fears for your students related to their college experience or life in general after high school. Big or small, your dreams and fears are all valid, and you might be surprised at how common some of these thoughts are amongst other parents."*

# Getting Started

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION

This section's purpose is to prepare parents to have open-minded conversations with their students about college. You will guide the parents through prompted discussion questions and openly share best practices for having conversations with their students to keep things productive and encourage an open line of communication for the future.

### Example Activity Introduction

*“Starting the conversation is all about how to have an open discussion about the college experience with your student. Some of you (parents) may have recent college experience while others' knowledge of college may be dated or limited. No matter the case, it's important to know your life experience in general is valuable and your students can benefit from your wisdom. Let's look at some of the questions we can ask our students to soft-launch into a college discussion.”*

### Hypothetical and Practice

The second part of this section is a hypothetical conversation a parent might have with their student. Encourage the parents to share with their group or as a whole about how to best navigate this type of conversation. Remember to validate the emotions that might come up when discussing topics like finances or their student moving far away.

### Example Closing

*“Now that we've worked through the hypothetical conversation regarding finances and out-of-state school with your student, let's practice something more specific to your situation and student. You have a practice sheet that prompts you to write down a likely situation you might encounter with your student regarding college. Based on the discussion we've had together and your specific situation, write down possible action steps or discussion points you could follow to best navigate your situation. Our goal is to ensure the line of communication is open with our students and that they feel comfortable to come to us when they need support or have questions.”*

# Getting Started

## EXPLORING CAREERS

This section provides tools and conversation starters around a student's intended career goals. This section acts as a resource for parents to share with their students and eventually begin conversations around their intended career goals. Future Finder, Career One Stop, and the Occupational Outlook handbook all can help parents and their students make decisions around career paths and understand the details involved with specific careers. Additionally, there are example questions a parent might ask as they're researching careers with their student.

### Example Activity Introduction

*“This section is a great resource for you to begin having conversations with your students around their potential career paths and overall career goals. This section has a few great resources listed– Future Finder is a quiz that will ask you questions about your skills and interests, and then it will help narrow down a few career options based on your answers. Career One Stop and the Occupational Outlook Handbook are two tools that can help you and your student understand the details involved with specific careers. For some of your students, these conversations may have already started. These resources are still a great way to solidify those decisions and further your understanding together.”*

**Note:** Have detailed resourced pulled up to give quick exposure to what they look like and how to use them.

# Selecting A College

## UNDERSTANDING THE OPTIONS

Your audience is attending this workshop because they want to understand their students' options and how best to support them. In this section, you'll have an opportunity to work through the different degrees and certificates their student might work towards, and what each of those degrees and certificates exactly mean. Encourage parents to write down any lingering questions they might have or they might want to ask their students as you are working through this portion of the workshop.

### Example Section Explanation

***“When it comes to understanding your options, you must first understand what the options are! This portion of the workbook provides an opportunity to learn the terminology around the different types of degrees and certificates offered at colleges and universities.”***

# Selecting A College

## NARROWING DOWN THE LIST

When it comes to making a decision on which college or university to pursue, it's important to narrow down what priorities are there and which ones will take precedence for your audience. This section is an activity-guided section that will help parents and their students narrow down their list of college options based on priorities like distance from home, school setting, campus and facilities, faculty and academics, and dormitories. In the next section, parents and students will have an opportunity to reflect on the college choices of their students based on the financial aspect. For now, we will focus only on these more light-hearted priorities to encourage open conversation on the students' wants and needs from their college experience.

### Example Activity Introduction

*“Today we’re going to focus on narrowing down the list, just like the title of this section. You will each receive a college choice worksheet that will give you a list of different priorities to consider when your student is finalizing their college choice. Think of the most recent college your student has talked about or one they have visited this year. Based on your conversations, list whether each main characteristic of that college is a pro or con– then write a quick note on the level of importance. For example, if you and your student have discussed wanting to get out of state for college, but would rather attend a college that has a really great veterinary program, distance would be a pro but add a note describing where distance falls on college choice priorities.”*

# Paying For College

## UNDERSTANDING THE COST OF COLLEGE

This section is exactly what it sounds like— we’re going to talk about the cost of college and guidance for families in understanding the financial requirements of college, what different types of family support looks like, and how to budget with their students.

### Example Discussion: Cost of Attendance

*“Here we can discuss what exactly the cost of attendance means and how the cost of attendance changes between the different types of institutions.*

*Cost of attendance is a universal term for the cost of tuition and fees for attending a college, university, or training program.*

*There are many types of colleges and institutions, but typically you will find these four describing the institutions your student might be looking at:*

- *four-year public university (in-state)*
- *four-year public university (out of state)*
- *two-year public university (in district), and*
- *four-year private college/university (non-profit)*

*As you may have noticed, staying in state compared to going out of state has a significant impact on the cost of attendance. Two-year universities, which might be community colleges or trade programs, tend to cost less. Private colleges and universities are significantly more expensive than all of the other types of institutions and that is because of their funding source. Public institutions are government-funded, while private institutions rely on tuition and endowments. With that said, private institutions may offer more generous financial aid.*



# Paying For College

## UNDERSTANDING THE COST OF COLLEGE

### Example Discussion: Boise State University - 2022-23 Cost of Attendance Chart

*“This is a chart that shows the cost of attendance at Boise State University, a 4-year public university, for the 2022-2023 school year. This details the cost of attendance for both in-state and out-of-state students. For the most part, tuition and fees will not sway from what is listed. When it comes to books and supplies, food and housing, transportation, and personal/miscellaneous items, these items will vary depending on your student’s situation. For example, if your student has family that lives in or near Boise, housing may cost less or nothing. Additionally, although books and supplies will be an expense, there are ways to keep this category inexpensive through renting textbooks or buying used. All in all, take the cost of attendance for any institution with a grain of salt, as it will fluctuate based on each student’s unique situation and approach.”*

### Example Activity Introduction: Cost of Attendance

*“If your student has already narrowed down their college choices to their top few, take a few minutes to look up the cost of attendance for their choices or just practice looking up the cost of attendance at a few colleges or universities you are familiar with.”*

### Example Discussion: Residency Requirements

*“Residency may be more impactful on your student’s decision making process when it comes to choosing a college or university to attend. Keep in mind, each state has their own residency requirement and it’s important to be aware of those ahead of time. As for Idaho, you must either keep a home in the state of Idaho for an entire tax year or you must spend at least 270 days of the year in the state of Idaho (9 months).”*

# Paying For College

## UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This section is important for the parents and families because it lays out the common terms and definitions around financial support that they would hear from colleges and institutions, and throughout their college search process. Be sure to hit on each of the terms parents will see in their workbook, and guide discussion around how each of these financial supports could impact their student's process.

### Federal Financial Aid

Use powerpoint or your copy of the parent handbook to guide through each of the terms in this section.

### Scholarships

Use powerpoint or your copy of the parent handbook to guide through each of the terms in this section.

# Paying For College

## THE VALUE OF FAMILY SUPPORT

The “Value of Family Support” section is meant to discuss the different ways parents and families bring valuable support to their students during their first year of college and beyond. This may include financial support, but can also include moral support or emotional support as well. This section’s goal is to help families understand that no matter how they show up and support their student, they are a valuable resource and their students will be better off for it.

### Example Discussion

*“It’s easy to assume family support primarily includes providing some type of monetary value to your student during their college experience. Although this is one way to support your student, you may be supporting your student by providing a stable place to live, paying for their health insurance or cell phone, or providing emotional support to keep them motivated and ambitious to reach their goals.”*

### Example Activity Prompt

*“Before you move on, take the time to prepare a list of ways in which you are willing and able to support your student as they transition to college.”*

# Paying For College

## BUDGETING FOR COLLEGE

Use the “Budgeting for College” worksheet in the resources section to help walk the parents through what it might look like for cost of attendance, including potential scholarships and any financial contribution they might make. Encourage the family to research for actual numbers and ask questions as they’re working through the budgeting worksheet.

**Note:** Families may want to fill out the budget sheet for two or more institutions to compare costs.



# What To Expect

## THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

This section is a resource for families and their soon-to-be college students so they can understand the timeline of the transition to college, the admissions process, and overall student life on a college campus.

### The College Admissions Process

This section discusses terminology around the college admissions process. Take time to discuss each of the terms the parents will see in their own workbooks and answer any questions they might have about each one. Be sure to discuss the general roadmap in their workbook that shows the likely order of their students' pre-college responsibilities.

### Create a Checklist

Encourage families to create a checklist of all the items their student needs to complete prior to their first day of class. Direct parents to the 12th grade checklist provided by Next Steps Idaho. It may even be a good idea to have this pre-printed for their convenience.

### Credit Hours

Credit hours is a complex topic to discuss, especially for parents who have been out of the college game for a while or for parents who have never had the experience before. Discuss how many credits make a student full-time and part-time, bring up a formula that helps determine how many hours of weekly studying their child would have to do per credit hour they take.

### Schedules

Schedules can be flexible in college, but there are still certain things to consider—such as the size of campus, the distance and time between next classes, and whether the student is interested in having a job while going to school. Be sure to discuss all of these compliments with the parents before moving on.

# What To Expect

## THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

### FERPA

Discuss what a FERPA release is and have families search for their desired college's FERPA release as you're discussing this topic.

### Drop and Withdrawal Deadline

Drop and withdrawal deadlines can make or break a student being able to complete their required number of credits or graduate on time. Drops and withdrawals on transcripts also impact cumulative and semester GPA's in different ways. Be sure to discuss these differences in impacts and the overall pros and cons of having either a D or W on a student's transcript.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress

Discuss the three main components of a student's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), which includes grade point average, course completion rate, and maximum timeframe.

# What To Expect

## STUDENT LIFE

Student life is all about teaching the families how to connect their students with their college's own community of resources to better their experience on their college campus. This section will discuss the different campus resources and the purpose or services those campus resources may offer to a student.

### Example Activity Introduction: Scavenger Hunt

*“One of the best ways to support your student’s success on campus and throughout their college experience is by aligning resources and external support that can be available to them now and in the future. On-campus resources like health centers, counseling centers, and much more are typically free to college attending students. Let’s do a quick scavenger hunt to define different on-campus resources your student might need or want to utilize, and then describe some purposes or services that your student might utilize at that location. For example, an advising center is where your student might go to meet with their academic advisor. The purpose about why they would visit their advisor might be to adjust their credit load or check-in to see if they’re on track to graduate on time.”*

### Example Activity Introduction: Locating Resources

*“Let’s take some time to identify other types of resources your student might need. We’re going to think about clubs, events, additional resources on campus, and other community resources that might be of help to your student throughout their college experience. For example, on-campus events in the theater department or annual events for students might have specific contacts or locations that are necessary for the student to have ahead of time. Community resources such as a local food bank, doctor’s office, or most affordable grocery store can be great resources for students as well. Take into consideration the needs, interests, and specific must-haves of your student and begin filling out your resource tables.”*



## Resources

The resources section of the parent's workbook includes activity sheets, glossary of terms, notes & ideas, and GEAR UP contact information.

Be sure to share with the parents that this workbook is meant to be their resource to refer back to when they need a refresher on any topics their student brings to the conversation. Encourage parents to use the resources, but most importantly be confident in the value they bring to their student and the conversation around their college journey.

# RESOURCES

- 32 | Notes & Ideas
- 38 | Contact GEAR UP Idaho





## Contact GEAR UP Idaho

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