

COLLEGE DECISION DAY: 11 THINGS TO DO NOW

HAS YOUR TEEN ALREADY DECIDED WHERE HE WILL SPEND THE NEXT FOUR YEARS OF HIS LIFE? MAY 1 IS NATIONAL COLLEGE DECISION DAY, A DEADLINE FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS TO CHOOSE WHICH COLLEGE TO ATTEND.

This is a moment to rejoice. Your child was accepted to college and all of your effort and his have resulted in this success. There may be some small disappointments, there may be euphoria and there may be some big decisions ahead, but this is one of life's big moments and it should be noted and celebrated. Let your nearly grown child know just how proud you are and acknowledge how much of his effort it took to get to this moment.

Once your family has taken a time to savor this special moment, there are a few more practical matters that need your attention, especially with the May 1 deadline of National College Decision Day.



College Decision Day and Next Steps to Consider

1. Get ready to listen, talk, then listen again.

For many seniors, college decision day represents one of the biggest choices in their lives. Each school has its pros and cons and it soon becomes clear that, while the options may be exciting, as in life, nothing is perfect. For teens this can be both confusing and frustrating and parents are at their best as sounding boards in this process.

2. On the waitlist?

If your kid has opted to remain on the waitlist for one or more colleges, please know that, according to the authors of our favorite college guidebook, *College Admission*, "The waitlist works in different ways from college to college."

3. Orientation dates are scheduled. See how they work into your calendar.

Orientation dates will be in the summer, fall, or both, depending on the school. Look now and see if you, again, need to book air and hotel rooms. Maybe your kid will go on her own, maybe this is a family adventure, either way, once the college decision is made, it is time to start planning.

4. Seek hidden funds.

While your child's chosen college may or may not offer merit scholarships, some exist for the parent who goes looking. Employers, local service organizations and others offer support for deserving students. Your child may be in a swirl of AP exams, prom prep and end of year activities, but it doesn't mean that you cannot be researching scholarship opportunities.

5. The road ahead will have some bumps.

It seems that once the good news has arrived, once both parent and teen are assured that the latter is going to college, the stress should fade and it should be smooth sailing until move-in day. This is the fantasy. The reality is that a massive life change is ahead for both parent and child. And while this period will be filled with many of life's highlights, it is also filled with some pain and dislocation.

Teens getting ready to leave have (despite their protestations) mixed feelings about going out on their own. Some take it in stride, others can become difficult (but you

knew this!) as they push us away. Anger and frustration can rise up in us as we attempt to mask our own sadness at their departure, as excited as we are for them.

6. Academic requirements and advance placement are no longer theoretical.

If your student has not already poured over the pages of the academic requirements and AP policies, now is the time to do so. Colleges vary widely on what they accept for course credit and placement (which you may already know.) AP, SAT and SAT II tests (again, depending on college) might be used to give credit for requirements, and your child still has time to sign up for the May or June SAT II tests, if they are relevant. Additionally, official scores for these tests may still need to be sent to your child's chosen college.

7. Book Parents Weekend for the fall.

Many small college towns have limited hotel and restaurant facilities. When your child has pushed the button on their college of choice, be sure to book what you need for Family Weekend in the fall.

8. Get ready to cheer.

Football fans? Take a look at the calendar of home and away games and see if any of the dates work into your schedule. Might not be easy at all to score tickets but it could make for a fun, non-official parents weekend with your freshman and their new friends.

9. Avoid Thanksgiving traffic jams.

If school is a plane trip away, take a look at the academic calendar around Thanksgiving and book airline, train or bus tickets. Amtrak often sells out weeks in advance and flights to small towns can be limited. This moment of practical activity will help you remember that it isn't very long before your freshman will be right back home.

10. Wait to go shopping for college.

Every kid will need [provisions for their dorm room](#) but you may be tempted to over buy as you desperately want your child to be prepared to manage...without you. Other than two sets of extra-long twin sheets (a true dorm necessity) it is best to wait on buying big, bulky things until you know the configuration of your child's dorm

room. Bunk beds? Underbed storage? If so, what is the clearance? Knowing this will make a big difference in determining true “dorm room essentials.” In the meantime, locate The Container Store, Bed, Bath and Beyond, or Target closest to your child’s college. You can order online and arrange to pick up all your son and daughter needs (and them some) without overstuffing your car for the drive from home.

11. Take a deep breath and exhale.

Your family is about to make one of its biggest changes. It is a wonderful, heart wrenching and seminal moment. While we watch our kids pass into the next stage in their lives there are more than a few little matters we can attend to help them on their way.

As two moms getting ready to say goodbye to [their youngest kids](#) this fall, we have also learned the deep support that friends can give in dealing with the big change that is coming into our lives as our days become our own and our houses get much quieter. As deeply proud as we are of our young adults, this transition can be tinged with a bit of sadness. Good luck to your high school senior and many congratulations to you for helping her on the way.

By Grown and Flown Tag: Parents, High school seniors, High school juniors, Grandparents, College Freshman