



# COUNSELOR TALKING POINTS: WORKING WITH PARENTS

As a school counselor, you have a very important job! You know what it takes to get your students ready for and excited about their education after high school, and you serve as a trusted source of information for them and their parents.

Parents have unique concerns about sending their child to college. Whether it's a financial or personal concern, you can empower parents with the tools they need to make college a reality for their child.

As you visit with parents, you may find a few obstacles. Some may feel uncomfortable speaking with you or unsure what types of questions to ask about college planning. To break the ice, you may want to start by asking if the parent has any questions or concerns about their child attending college or a career technology center. Start from there and if other obstacles come up, we've listed some information below that might help.

- ▶ The parent might state their child has a job and without that income the family would have a hard time making ends meet. You might be able to calm those fears by stating:
  - ▶ It can be hard for families who depend on money from a child's job to help support the family; however, the rewards of higher education can mean more for the family in the long run. A college education can help in a variety of ways with a family business. The knowledge a student gains in school can help provide valuable input on expanding, growing and managing a business to make it more successful.
  - ▶ Statistics show college graduates can earn a 75% higher salary than high school graduates.
- ▶ You may hear a parent state their child will not fit in at college. You may be able to provide some personal input to help them change their mind; your interaction with the students may give you some insight. You can also offer the following tips:
  - ▶ Some campuses make support groups available to college students. There are several associations made up of students with similar faiths, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Advisers and counselors are available on-campus to help students find these groups.
  - ▶ Parental support is extremely important to the success of students enrolled in college or a career technology center.
  - ▶ People who complete education after high school have been shown to live happier, healthier lives. Research has shown that college graduates usually live longer, are smarter consumers and have more varied interests than those who don't go to college.
  - ▶ College provides the satisfaction of personal growth. Students can explore new subjects, meet different people and participate in activities they might not otherwise experience.
  - ▶ There are so many college options to choose from! Rather than wondering if a student will fit in, investigate colleges that may be the best match for the student. As a parent, you can create an account on [OKcollegestart.org](https://www.okcollegestart.org) to explore campuses that may be a good fit for your child.
- ▶ Some parents may not see a need for college. There are many positive responses to a comment like this. The following points may give you some ideas.
  - ▶ A college degree will make it easier to get a job, because there are more jobs available for college graduates than for those without a degree or certificate. Projections show that in 2025, 77% of the state's new labor market will require education or training beyond high school, highlighting the critical need for higher education.
  - ▶ People without college degrees are more likely to be unemployed at some point in their lives.

You may wish to provide parents a list of terms to shed some light on the information they see when reviewing college catalogs or pamphlets. Make copies of the Glossary found in the High School Student Workbook and online at [UCanGo2.org/Educators.html](https://www.ucango2.org/Educators.html).



# COUNSELOR TALKING POINTS: IDENTIFYING STUDENT PLANS FOR COLLEGE

Reaching out to students about their future can be a challenging endeavor. As a school counselor, you provide students with guidance in choosing an educational path that works best for them.

Although students are far too diverse to be truly categorized, we've identified three common reactions students might have to attending college:

- ▶ I plan to go to college!
- ▶ I think I'll go to college.
- ▶ Is college a possibility for me?

Consider using the following lists of talking points to help identify fears, expectations and misconceptions students may face regarding education after high school. The questions provided will help students open up and talk about their wants and needs related to higher education. You can also use the attached worksheet to keep track of your students' interests.





## I PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE!

Some students know they'll continue their education after high school. Here are some questions and topics to discuss with students to support their decision-making process.

- ▶ What are your interests?
- ▶ Have you decided on a career path?
- ▶ What will you and your parents look for in a school?
- ▶ Discuss current classes and activities the student is involved in to see if they're a good fit for the student's goals.
- ▶ Have you done any research about the schools you're interested in attending? Make sure you involve your parents in campus visits and share specifics such as deadline dates for applications and financial aid forms. Check out [OKcollegestart.org](https://www.okcollegestart.org) for information about Oklahoma schools.
- ▶ Has your family made arrangements financially to help cover your educational expenses?
- ▶ If cost is a factor, you may want to think about attending a lower-cost community college, career technology center or other short-term program before transferring to a four-year university. Some schools even allow you to take a few college classes during your junior and senior years in high school. These options can help you save some money. Have you thought about concurrent enrollment while in high school?
- ▶ When you get ready to apply for financial aid, check out the FAFSA resources at [StartWithFAFSA.org](https://www.startwithfafsa.org). Parents and students are able to ask questions, watch video tutorials and receive valuable information about completing the FAFSA.
- ▶ Advise students to ask questions and gather as much information as possible.

Resources to hand out:

- ▶ [Do You Have a Plan for College? booklet](#)
- ▶ [Your Transition to College brochure](#)
- ▶ [Are You Looking for Money? booklet](#)



## I THINK I'LL GO TO COLLEGE.

Some students are considering college or a career technology center after high school, but may be hesitant to make a definitive choice. As a counselor, you can help them identify their concerns and create alternative paths to achieve their goals by asking them questions and discussing topics such as those listed below.

- ▶ What are your interests?
- ▶ What do you want to do in life?
- ▶ What are your primary goals after high school?
- ▶ What might keep you from going to college or a career technology center?
- ▶ Has your family made arrangements financially to help cover your educational expenses?
- ▶ If cost is a factor, you may want to think about attending a lower-cost community college or career technology center before transferring to a four-year university. Some schools even allow you to take a few college classes during your junior and senior years in high school. These options can help you save some money. Have you thought about concurrent enrollment while in high school?
- ▶ Try making a list of possible colleges that may offer the right classes and the campus culture and atmosphere you're looking for. Then do some research about them and narrow down the list to your top picks. Check out [OKcollegestart.org](https://www.okcollegestart.org) for information about Oklahoma campuses.
- ▶ Are your parents supportive of you attending college? Do you know someone who is attending college or has recently graduated from college? If so, ask them questions about their college-going experience and if they would be willing to serve as a mentor to you.
- ▶ Do you have questions about financial aid? Any college or career technology center's financial aid office can help you out.
- ▶ Encourage the student to talk to others who'll definitely attend college and ask them some of their top questions.
- ▶ Advise students to ask you questions about the college experience.

Resources to hand out:

- ▶ [Do You Have a Plan for College? booklet](#)
- ▶ [Your Transition to College brochure](#)
- ▶ [Degree Vs. On the Job Training chart](#)
- ▶ [Are You Looking for Money? booklet](#)



## IS COLLEGE A POSSIBILITY FOR ME?

Many students have never considered attending college. They may have been told by friends or family they're not "college material." There are many options for higher education such as four-year universities, two-year colleges, career technology centers and proprietary or trade schools. Help students explore all the possibilities for education after high school by discussing the questions and topics listed below.

- ▶ What are your interests?
- ▶ What do you want to do in life?
- ▶ How will you reach your goals without a degree or certificate?
- ▶ What are your skills? How can you use those skills to move ahead in a job or profession? Would education after high school be beneficial to you?
- ▶ Think about some schools that might offer courses or certificates associated with the student's interests and skills. Offer some suggestions for researching how these schools might help the student with their future goals. Encourage them to keep track of schools that are of interest to them. Encourage students to use [OKcollegestart.org](https://www.okcollegestart.org) to explore careers, compare schools and complete interest and skill inventories.
- ▶ Have you spoken with your parents about the possibility of a college education? What are their thoughts or concerns? Would they be supportive if you decided to enroll in school?
- ▶ Do you know financial aid is available to almost everyone, no matter what income your family makes? Check out [StartWithFAFSA.org](https://www.startwithfafsa.org) for information about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- ▶ Encourage the student to talk to others who'll definitely attend college and ask them questions about how they made their choice.
- ▶ Advise them to ask you questions.

Resources to hand out:

- ▶ [Do You Have a Plan for College? booklet](#)
- ▶ [Your Transition to College flyer](#)
- ▶ [Degree Vs. On the Job Training chart](#)
- ▶ [Are You Looking for Money? booklet](#)



# STUDENT PLANS FOR COLLEGE WORKSHEET

## WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW CAN YOU ACHIEVE THE GOALS YOU'VE SET FOR YOURSELF?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT SCHOOLS ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ATTENDING?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_