

Teachable Moments - College Choice Assessment

Use this short assessment to help your child find the right college.

The training program my child is interested in taking is: _____

This training is available at the following types of schools:

- Technical college
- Private career school
- Two-year college
- Four-year college or university

The size of school my child would like to attend:
(Check all that apply)

- Small
- Medium
- Large

My child would like to attend a school:
(Check all that apply)

- In-state
- Out-of-state
- In a small town
- In a mid-size city
- In a large city

The college my child attends should offer the following activities (for example - choir, drama, marching band, student government, newspaper):

Make a "target" school list. Five to ten schools that meet the preceding criteria are:

My child will need financial assistance to attend college. Yes No

If my child does need financial assistance, his or her "target" schools that offer financial assistance are:

Once you and your child have gathered information about the criteria that are important and have selected five to ten colleges that meet the criteria, visit each school, if possible, and make a final decision.



This is the beginning of an exciting journey!

For more information:

Student Aid on the Web - www.studentaid.ed.gov for information on preparing for, choosing, applying to, funding, attending and repaying college.

College is Possible - www.collegeispossible.org for a list of various resources that can help with the college search.

Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education - www.ribghe.org

College Planning Center of Rhode Island - www.collegeplanningcenter.org

This brochure was originally prepared by
America's Career Resource Network (ACRN)
www.acrnetwork.org

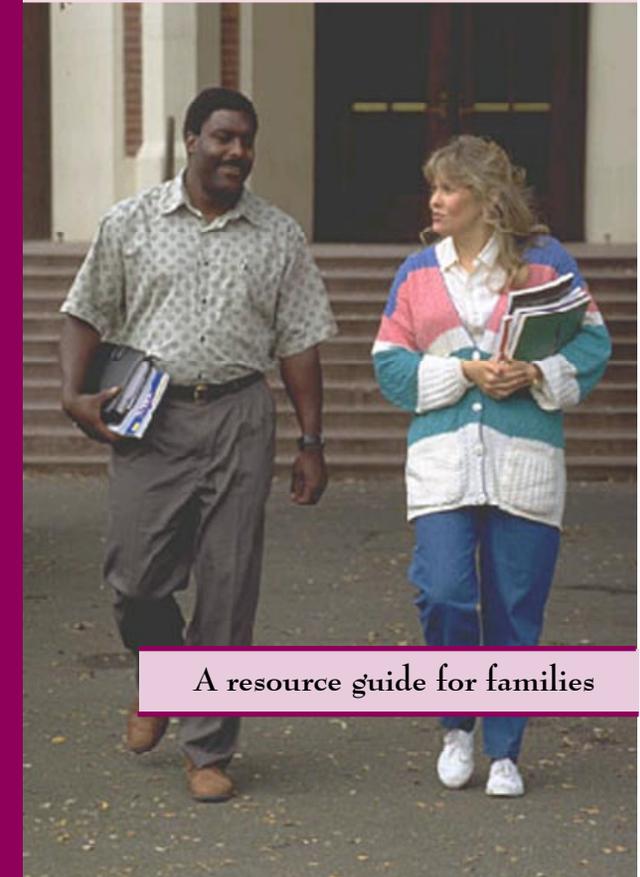


Rhode Island Department of
Labor and Training

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Education is expensive and time consuming.
What if your child chooses the wrong school?

Finding the Right College



A resource guide for families

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Where can my child find college information?



Choose a college based on criteria that are important to you and your child. When creating an educational plan, think about the future, and how college will help your child prepare for a career.

Where do I find information about colleges?

Sending your child to college is a big investment. Here are some ways to help your child choose the right school.

- ✓ **Talk to the high school counselor.** Your child's high school counselor is a great resource for information about colleges. The counselor can also help your child focus on his or her needs and goals and has information about different types of schools. The counselor may help collect or prepare college application materials for your child as well.
- ✓ **Visit a variety of schools.** Schedule visits to schools your child has an interest in, preferably while classes are being taught. Get a feel for each school; make sure you and your child are comfortable with the facilities, the equipment, the teachers and the students.
- ✓ **Ask questions.** A good school will happily answer your questions about its programs. Ask the school about life after college for its students: How many graduate? How many get jobs because of the training they received? What kind of job placement services does the school offer students and graduates?
- ✓ **Check the cost.** The school should give you a clear statement of its tuition and fees. Remember that any federal financial aid you receive will be applied first to paying the school's tuition and fees. If there is any money left over, the school may or may not allow you to use the remainder to help your child pay for expenses such as food and housing.
- ✓ **Utilize your local library & the Internet as other resources to find information on schools.**

What training options are available to my child?

There are four types of colleges:

✓ **Four-year colleges/universities** offer a variety of class subjects, as well as different degrees. Tuition at public colleges and universities is less than tuition at private colleges and universities. If your child wants to attend college outside of the state where you live, tuition at a public four-year college or university will be higher than if your child attended a public college or university within your state.

✓ **Community colleges** offer three basic kinds of degrees/certificates:

- Academic transfer degrees
- Professional-technical degrees and
- Certificates of achievement

An academic transfer allows your child to complete the first 90 college credits at a community college, then transfer to a four-year college or university. The professional-technical degree prepares your child directly for work. A certificate program provides skills for entry into the job market or career advancement. Tuition at a community college is less than tuition at a four-year college or university; therefore, attending one for two years and transferring to a four-year college or university is a good way to save on the cost of college if your child decides to earn a bachelor's degree or a higher degree.

✓ **Technical colleges** offer two-year degrees and shorter-term certificates in technical programs. Tuition at technical colleges is likely to be greater than that of a community college.

✓ **Private career colleges** offer specialized degree or certificate-granting programs. Tuition varies depending on the school and the program, and some programs take less than two years to complete.



How do I help my child find the right college?

Important factors to keep in mind when choosing a college:



✓ **In-State or Out-of-State.** In-state tuition is less expensive than out-of-state. Do colleges within your state offer the degree, activities and other criteria you and your child are looking for?

✓ **Public or Private.** Public schools generally have less restrictive admission requirements and cost less than private schools. Publicly funded state schools are generally more accessible than private schools. Private schools, however, often offer smaller class sizes and more personalized education.

✓ **School Size and Class Sizes.** At large universities, your child may be in classes that range from 25 to 500 students. At small colleges, classes usually range from five to 100 people.

✓ **Student Activities.** You and your child should determine if the colleges and universities you are considering offer activities with which your child would like to get involved.

✓ **Location.** Is the college located in a rural community, a small town or a city? This can be an important consideration when it comes to housing, transportation and access to off-campus activities.

✓ **Atmosphere and Physical Surroundings.** Each school has its own atmosphere, which includes the interests and attitudes of the students as well as the physical environment. It may be politically vibrant or it could center on school spirit, tradition, and athletics. Collectively decide what atmosphere is best for your child. Visit colleges whenever possible.

✓ **Housing Options.** Is on-campus housing available? If your child wishes to live off-campus, will transportation be accessible and safe?