

Action Plan: Your Junior

Junior year is a whirlwind of activity, from studying for SAT® tests and AP® Exams to considering colleges to apply to and visiting campuses. On top of all that, it's important that your child keeps up good grades and continues to participate in extracurricular activities. Phew! To keep on track, follow the action items listed for each season below.

September

- This year the [PSAT/NMSQT®](#) counts! Taking it can qualify your child to receive a National Merit Scholarship. Be sure your child is signed up to take the PSAT/NMSQT this October.
- Your child should pick up a copy of the PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin at the school's guidance office, and take the enclosed practice test. For further practice, your child should use the online [PSAT/NMSQT Preparation Center](#).
- Encourage your child to meet with the [school counselor](#) to compare the academic requirements for each of his target schools and his own course schedule. If necessary, he should adjust his schedule.

October

- Your child takes the PSAT/NMSQT. Be sure he checks 'yes' for [Student Search Service®](#) to hear from colleges and scholarships.
- Your child should visit the [SAT Preparation Center™](#) to download a free diagnostic mini-SAT, and to get SAT PrepPacks™ to focus his practice where he needs it most.
- Take your child to college fairs in your area.

November

- Fall is a good time to start the college search! Encourage your child to brainstorm a list of characteristics that are important to her (e.g., [location](#), size). By plugging criteria into [College Search](#) your child can find schools that suit his needs. He should contact the colleges to request applications and financial aid information.
- Help your child identify test requirements for his target schools, including scores for the SAT, SAT Subject Tests™, ACT, and others. His PSAT/NMSQT scores can give him an idea of what he would score on the SAT and help him focus his practice for it.
- Tap resources at your child's high school, in the community, and online to learn how your family can finance your child's target colleges. Learn about today's [college costs](#) and how [financial aid](#) works.
- Use the [Expected Family Contribution \(EFC\) Calculator](#) to estimate how much your family will be expected to pay.

December

- Help your child [register online](#) for the SAT and SAT Subject Tests, which are offered several times during the year. Many colleges require or recommend 1-3 Subject Tests for admission or placement. If your child is planning to apply early decision, he should be sure to complete required tests by the end of junior year.
- Encourage your child to find out about college firsthand from friends who are home from college for the holidays.

January

- Help your child organize a file for college brochures and information. Before you know it, they'll start pouring in.
- Use collegeboard.com's online [Scholarship Search](#) to find aid that matches your child's skills and interests. Talk to the school counselor with your child about local scholarship opportunities.

February

- Your child can visit the [SAT Preparation Center](#) to focus his practice for upcoming SAT tests.
- Plan to [visit college campuses](#) with your child this spring while classes are in session. Schedule interviews with admissions officers.

March

- Most students take the SAT in spring of junior year and/or fall of senior year. Help your child [register online](#) for spring and summer SAT tests.
- Your child should meet with her counselor to discuss [AP courses](#) to take senior year. He may want to consider taking a course at a local college, especially if he's interested in a subject for which his school doesn't offer AP courses.
- Now is a great time for your child to start looking for a [summer job, internship](#), or [volunteer opportunity](#). Real-world experience can give your child a preview of careers in which he's interested. This may help him focus his studies in college and when he's selecting a major.
- Encourage your child to meet with his school counselor and search online for [summer learning programs](#) offered to high school students at colleges.

April

- AP Exams are in May. Encourage your child to visit the [AP Prep Center](#) for tips and prep materials.
- Attend local college fairs with your child.
- If applicable, your child should prepare writing samples, portfolios, audition tapes, and other material for the fall application season.

May

- Your child can take [SAT Subject Tests](#) when he has successfully completed the corresponding high school course (B+ average or better).
- Help your child make a resume of her accomplishments, activities, and work experience.
- Suggest to your child that he start a [summer reading list](#). He may want to ask his teachers for ideas.

Summer

- [Visit college campuses](#) with your high schooler. Call ahead for tour and open house schedules.
- If your child is planning to take the SAT in the fall, he should [register online](#) now.
- Discuss different [college majors](#) with your child that relate to his interests and career goals.

- To help your child start thinking about life after high school, access MyRoad. Your child will take MyRoad's questionnaire to get a detailed report on his personality type. Then MyRoad will connect him to in-depth information on careers and majors that are right for him. [Learn about MyRoad](#).
- By the end of summer, your child should narrow his [college list](#) to 5-8 schools. The list should include "safe" schools as well as "reach" and "realistic" schools.
- Help your child prepare drafts of [application essays](#) for his target schools.
- If your child plans on competing in Division I or Division II college sports and wants to be eligible to be recruited by colleges, he must register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.
- Together with your child, mark a calendar with important application and financial aid dates and deadlines for senior year. Start planning for dates and deadlines with the [College Application Calendar](#) and the [Financial Aid Calendar](#).