

**Family Newsletter**

October 2014

**An important checklist for helping your student prepare for college**

* Review your student’s high school plan.
* Encourage them to take classes that complement their talents and interests.
* Are they taking the most challenging classes available?
* Will they be taking the practice SAT this year? There are sample questions at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
* Does your student need a tutor for any of their classes? Is there help available to them at school?
* Are your students studying every night?
* Are there opportunities for your child to be involved with extracurricular activities? What about volunteering?
* If your student has a job, is there still enough time for homework and socializing with friends?
* Have you talked to your child about going to college and what they might like to study there?
* Have you taken your child on any campus visits or sent them on campus visits with GEAR UP?
* Have you begun to save for your student’s college education? It’s not too late to start.
* Have you and your student looked into scholarship opportunities to pay for schooling?

**Helping your student get the most out of 10th grade**

Here are six (6) tips to help your student get the most out of school this year.

1. Make sure they are going to school and going to all their classes. They can’t learn if they aren’t there. Also, one thing your students don’t know yet: Good attendance records show future employers that they are dependable.
2. Help your student get organized and stay organized. Help them learn to manage their time. Make sure they have the pencils, paper and folders they need for getting their work done. GEAR UP provides them with a planner. Ask to see it. Do they have their assignments written in them? Their job schedule? Extracurricular activities?
3. Are they getting their homework done and studying for tests? Some classes count homework grades as part of their final grade for the class. Make sure your child is getting all the points they can. Are they spending enough time studying for tests?
4. Does your student ask for help when they need it? If they don’t “get” the homework, how can they pass the tests? If you can’t help them with their math homework, find someone who can. If you are not good at history, is there a tutor available?
5. “Good enough” is not really good enough. Help your child see that they should always challenge themselves to do their very best. It’s important for them to see that they should do more than just what they need to do to “just get by.” Grades earned in 10th grade are important for getting into college. Let your student know you are proud of them for all the good grades they earn.

**Mealtime Conversations**

There used to be a time when families sat at the table together every night to share a meal and news of the day. Times have changed. People work different shifts, kids have sports or community theater, and family time has changed.

But whether you spend a few minutes over breakfast or sharing McDonald’s in the car on the way to some event, there’s still time to engage in conversations. Get to know what your student is thinking about.

Challenge your child to think critically. Ask questions like

* What would you do if a natural disaster struck?
* What if someone handed them $1000?
* What would they do if their friend was being bullied or abused?
* What could/would they do if they found out their favorite clothing brand was using environmentally destructive practices?
* Ask them about their political views or for an opinion on a local or school issue.
* What do they think of the situation in Afghanistan?
* What do they think of the young Latino kids who are coming to American without their parents?
* What would they do if they went to a party and got drunk? Or their driver was obviously drunk.
* What things would be on their bucket list?

Ask open-ended questions, not just questions that could be answered by a yes or no. Listen to them and ask follow-up questions. Perhaps you will want to share your opinions, too, but be careful not to dismiss their answers.

**Helping Your Child Prepare for the Future**

Do you remember what you are passionate about? If you have free time what’s the one thing you really want to do? No, sleeping doesn’t count!

Do you pick up the latest novel by your favorite author?

Shoot hoops?

Tinker with that 1974 Chevy in the garage?

Cook something from scratch?

Whatever your passion – encourage your child to help you out. Share an author. Find the secret ingredient in Grandma’s prize winning pie. Challenge your kid to a game of HORSE, if you remember what that is.

Letting them help you plan a family vacation could help with setting realistic goals or priorities. Show them how to budget for food, hotel rooms, and the price of any attractions you might stop at. Figure out how many miles you can travel on a tank of gas or how many miles you can cover in a day. Maybe they can teach you how to use the computer.

Encourage them to try something new or challenge yourself to try something they like to do. Have you embraced the outdoors with hiking, camping, or canoeing?

Encourage them to try new things and find their passion. Maybe you will make the journey together and discover a new or different career path for yourself as well!

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**Then:**

Help build a house for Habitat for Humanity

Work at a soup kitchen

Work at UPaws

Hospitals always need volunteers. Call one.

Work for a radio station’s charity event

Help with an after school program

Set up e-mail for seniors in retirement centers

Be a museum guide

Volunteer on a campaign or for some cause

Tutor younger kids at school

**Getting your student involved!**

Do you want your child to get off the couch and get more involved? Here are some great suggestions for them (or even you).

Find a volunteer activity that interests you. That way you will want to participate and stay with it. It’s also a great way to check out career opportunities.

**If you like:**

Architecture

Social Work

Vet Medicine

Medicine

Music

Education

Computers

History

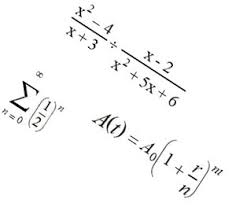
Political Science

Math

Remind your student to log their hours. Encourage them to get someone at the organization to sign a form or help your student create their own log book which includes the contact person’s name, phone number, date, activity, and time spent. Don’t forget volunteering at your place of worship, helping a local sports team, or helping out friends of the family.

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**Explaining to your student why Math is important.**

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://images.digitalmedianet.com/2008/Week_18/ryk867w0/story/math300.jpg&imgrefurl=http://mediadesigner.digitalmedianet.com/article/Ideal-for-Mathematics-Test-Preparation-Practice:-Making-Online-Quizzes-with-Math-Symbols-371577&h=272&w=300&tbnid=zNIBg6fkORpSrM:&zoom=1&docid=zElxCB2HyEhpjM&hl=en&ei=mN2NU6aHJsqMyATo1oLoAQ&tbm=isch&ved=0CHIQMygpMCk&iact=rc&uact=3&dur=1051&page=3&start=31&ndsp=24)

Families-

It’s up to you to help your student understand the importance of math in everyday life. By now your child should have completed Pre-algebra and Algebra and should now be working on Geometry. Math matters. Not only is it important to learn the concepts before you get to college, but math skills are needed in real-life jobs as well. Many electricians, plumbers, upholsterers, and carpenters use math regularly. So too might people who are into computer-aided design, computer graphics, robotics, medical imaging, structural engineering, building video games, and scientists working with protein modeling. It makes sense that land surveyors use geometry, as would architects, engineers who build bridges, and astronomers.

But what about everyday uses? Have you ever tried to figure out how many gallons of paint you will need to cover a room? What about how much sod to cover your lawn? What about all the cooks who need to adjust a recipe to be either larger or smaller?

How can you be sure your child is getting the best instruction in math at school?

* Is your student bringing home homework that requires lots of manipulations and word problems?
* Are his/her homework assignments corrected and returned in a timely manner?
* Do the students go over their homework in class, so they can learn from their mistakes?
* Does the teacher change up their way of teaching or the pace they are moving at, based on how well the students are performing in class or on tests?

Lastly, while calculators are a big help, don’t let your students become dependent upon them. Children need to learn the basics of math and many of the formulas. Then they can use the calculator to check their work.