

# THE TOP 10

## things that parents should remember about the college search process



Middlebury  
College

It is good, of course, that students and parents approach this process jointly. But the process itself can help prepare students for the independence they will experience in college. The following list contains some tips for maintaining a healthy level of parental involvement.

- 10. Remember that this process is not about you.** Students need to make their own decisions and observations, no matter how much you think you know best.
- 9. Support and encouragement are more appropriate than pressure and unsolicited advice.** Allow students to seek you out, and restrain yourself from imposing your viewpoint upon them.
- 8. Do not use “we” or “our” when referring to the application process.** Those pronouns are surefire indicators that you have become too involved.
- 7. Help them prepare but let them perform.** Encourage students to sleep well and put thought into a college visit, but once on campus, step back and let them drive the experience. This is good practice for the next phase of their lives: adulthood.
- 6. Encourage them to make their own college appointments, phone calls, and emails.** When a family arrives at an admissions office, it’s important that the student approach the front desk, not the parents. We notice! Having control over those details gives them a sense of ownership. Don’t be tempted by the excuse that “I’m just saving them time” or “they are too busy”—students will learn to appreciate all the steps it takes to make big things happen if they do them.
- 5. Allow them to ask the questions.** They have their own set of issues that are important to them.
- 4. Prepare them for disappointment.** For many students this is the first time they could face bad news. Remind them there is no perfect school and that admissions decisions do not reflect on their worth as people or your worth as parents.
- 3. Never complete any portion of the college application.** That also goes for friends, siblings, counselors, and secretaries. Many colleges would view this as a violation of the honor policy at the school.
- 2. Do not let stereotypes or outdated information steer them away from schools in which they would otherwise have an interest.** Times have changed and so have colleges.

### AND THE #1 THING FOR PARENTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE COLLEGE SEARCH PROCESS:

- 1. Never buy a sweatshirt or T-shirt in your size from the college you’re visiting—it’s a dead giveaway!**