



EDUCATIONAL PLANNING GUIDE



EDUCATIONAL PLANNING -- HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE, AND FINANCIAL AID PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

The Goals of Educational Planning

Take Stock in Children students need a great deal of assistance in all phases of educational planning. The four modules in this section are designed to help your student develop an appropriate educational plan for both high school and college, prepare for important standardized tests, and apply for financial aid.

Mentors Are Facilitators—Counselors Are Experts

As a mentor, your job will be to assist your student in the planning process by working through the various modules with him or her. You are not expected to be an expert educational planner. Guidance counselors are the experts in the field of educational planning.

How Mentors Can Help

Your task will be to use the activities in these modules to assist your student in the preparation of a plan that he/she can submit to a guidance counselor for assessment and/or approval. Guidance counselors are very busy people; they can help your student much more easily and quickly through the use of these tools.

How Will These Modules Help Students Plan?

These modules are designed to help students schedule the right courses, meet important deadlines, prepare for major events, and pay for college. Students who use them will be able to get very specific, pertinent information from their counselors--information that will help them make important decisions.

The Key Objectives of Planning

As you work through the modules with your student, make sure that he/she understands the importance of key deadlines and tasks. The academic calendar is a good monitoring tool that can make it much easier for your student to plan and stay on track. An old adage rings true: "People don't plan to fail; they fail to plan." These modules can help Take Stock in Children students plan for success.

Take Stock Students Are Pioneers

Many Take Stock in Children students will be the first members of their families to enter college. They are literally "pioneers" embarking upon an exciting but often intimidating journey into unknown territory. As you work with your student, remember that it is very natural for our students to feel overwhelmed at times and to want to give up when things seem too complicated or difficult.

MODULE 1: PLANNING FOR HIGH SCHOOL (ACTIVITIES 29-36)

The first set of activities is designed to help students understand the requirements for high school graduation and learn how to construct a four-year high school course schedule. For a variety of reasons, students sometimes do not schedule the courses required for high school graduation and are not aware of the courses they will need for college.

Students should begin to plan for high school in the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. Students who are already in high school should also work through these modules to make certain that they are taking the right courses and that they know their important deadlines and tasks. This module includes a comprehensive task list for each year of high school. Students who complete these tasks in a timely manner will be able to meet their key deadlines.

The tools in this module are intended to help students construct a tentative course schedule for high school and create a task list. The graduation requirements are minimum Florida standards. Please note that local school districts are authorized and encouraged to establish additional graduation requirements. Have your student check with the guidance office to identify any possible additional graduation requirements as soon as possible. Also have a counselor review your student's academic calendar closely each year.

Mentors can help students complete a four-year course schedule that fulfills their schools' graduation requirements and best prepares them for college or vocational school. This schedule should then be given to a school guidance counselor for review.

MODULE 2: PREPARING FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS (ACTIVITIES 37-45)

The second group of activities will direct your student to resources that can help him/her prepare for standardized tests. Standardized tests are used to measure students' academic progress and determine their eligibility for high school graduation. They are also one of the key factors in assessing a student's college eligibility.

Students in Florida high schools are required to pass the 10th Grade FCAT to be eligible for graduation. Students who excel on the SAT or ACT may qualify for scholarships, while those who perform poorly on these tests may not be able to attend their chosen college. Standardized tests are therefore very important events in a student's academic career.

This module will instruct students on the three ways to prepare for standardized tests: how to research the particular tests, how to acquire practice taking standardized tests, and the best ways to improve basic test-taking skills. Mentors have five key objectives in this module; they should encourage their students to:

1. Identify Registration and Test Dates
2. Learn How to Register for Tests
3. Understand Test Directions and Test Construction
4. Develop Test-Taking Skills
5. Devise an Effective Test Preparation Strategy

MODULE 3: PREPARING FOR COLLEGE (ACTIVITIES 46-52)

The third module focuses upon the steps students need to take to properly prepare for college. Take Stock in Children students come from low-income families in which there may be no member who has attended college; consequently, they may need a great deal of guidance and information if they are to be ready for college. This module makes it easy for mentors to show students how to construct practical plans for college. The activities will provide students with resources and concrete information to enable them to:

1. Select the Right Colleges
2. Apply to Colleges
3. Use Internet Resources to Plan for College

MODULE 4: FINANCIAL AID (ACTIVITIES 53-58)

The last module consists of a simple tutorial on financial aid: What are the types of financial aid and how can students obtain more financial aid? Take Stock in Children students receive a college tuition scholarship, but this scholarship will not cover all their college expenses. This module will provide students with information about Pell Grants, Bright Futures Scholarships, and many other sources of financial aid.

Take Stock in Children students should be encouraged to develop practical plans for paying for college early in their high school careers and to utilize the resources offered in this module. This module is intended to offer students a wide range of information about alternative ways to fund their college educations; it also includes practical tools to estimate college costs.

Your job as a mentor is to make certain your student understands how to apply for financial aid, the various types of financial aid, and the importance of creating a realistic budget to estimate the amount of financial aid he/she will need to attend college. You and your student can also use the online resources in this module to search for scholarships and other sources of financial aid.

Educational Planning Can Make All the Difference

These modules contain a great deal of practical information that can benefit every student. Educational planning is a very important set of processes that can often determine if a student succeeds or fails. Missing just one important deadline, failing to perform just one critical task, or not taking just one particular course can be enough to keep a student out of college. By means of proper planning, students can better prepare to meet their important tasks and deadlines, especially registering for standardized tests, applying for financial aid, and applying to college.

As you work through these modules with your student, you will quickly learn the importance of the information. Use of these tools can make monitoring your student's progress much easier.

MODULE 1: PLANNING FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Activity #29: Graduation Requirements Checklist

1. This checklist identifies the minimum Florida graduation requirements.
 2. Have your student obtain a copy of his/her transcript and use it to complete this checklist.
- (Note: Your student's school may have additional requirements. Check with the guidance office to find out.)**

PART 1: Credits Earned for High School Graduation

Place an "X" on a line if all credits in the area have been earned.

STUDENTS MUST ATTAIN 24 ACADEMIC CREDITS. The 24 credits shall be distributed as follows:

- _____ Language Arts: 4 Credits. English courses must include major concentrations in composition and literature.
- _____ Mathematics: 3 Credits. Algebra I must be included.
- _____ Science: 3 Credits. Two of the science credits must include a laboratory component.
- _____ American History: 1 Credit.
- _____ World History: 1 Credit.
- _____ Economics: .5 Credit.
- _____ American Government: .5 Credit.
- _____ Practical/Vocational/Performing Art: 1 Credit.
- _____ Life Management Skills: .5 Credits.
- _____ Physical Education: 1 Credit.
- _____ Electives: 8.5 Credits.

PART 2: Credits Needed for High School Graduation

Place a number in a box to indicate how many credits your student still needs to complete to fulfill the requirement.

- _____ Language Arts: 4 Credits. English courses must include major concentrations in composition and literature.
- _____ Mathematics: 3 Credits. Algebra I must be included.
- _____ Science: 3 Credits. Two of the science credits must include a laboratory component.
- _____ American History: 1 Credit.
- _____ World History: 1 Credit.
- _____ Economics: .5 Credit.
- _____ American Government: .5 Credit.
- _____ Practical/Vocational/Performing Art: 1 Credit.
- _____ Life Management Skills: .5 Credits.
- _____ Physical Education: 1 Credit.
- _____ Electives: 8.5 Credits.

Total Credits Still Needed for Graduation _____

Activity #30: Are You Eligible to Graduate ?**General Eligibility Requirements**

Have your student check "yes" or "no" for the following statements. The goal here is to make certain that your student understands all graduation requirements.

1. **Pass the 10th Grade FCAT.** Students must earn a passing score on the grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test to be eligible for graduation.

Yes _____ No _____

2. **Grade Point Average.** Students entering 9th grade are required to have a minimum grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale for promotion to a higher grade, for extra-curricular eligibility, and for graduation from high school.

Yes _____ No _____

3. **Elective Credits.** No student shall be granted credit toward high school graduation for enrollment in more than a total of nine elective credits in remedial programs.

Yes _____ No _____

4. No student shall be granted credit toward high school graduation for enrollment in more than one credit in exploratory vocational courses.

Yes _____ No _____

5. No student shall be granted credit toward high school graduation for enrollment in more than three credits in practical arts, family, and consumer classes.

Yes _____ No _____

6. No student shall be granted credit toward high school graduation for enrollment in any Level I course unless the student's assessment indicates that a more rigorous course of study would be inappropriate.

Yes _____ No _____