

# FAMILY GUIDE: GETTING YOUR CHILD FUTURE READY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



"The adult world of work is a complex, ever-evolving place. When parents, educators, and educational technology **work together to make the on-ramp to the future as long as possible**, we can help set our kids up for success – whatever that looks like to them."

(Hudson, 2021, 'What Role Do Parents Play...' section)

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According to research by Henderson & Mapp (2002), "studies found a **positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students**, including improved academic achievement. This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students at all ages. Although there is less research on the effects of community involvement, it also suggests benefits for schools, families, and students, including improved achievement and behavior" (p. 24).

## These benefits include:

1. Higher grade point averages and scores on standardized tests or rating scales
2. Enrollment in more challenging academic programs
3. More classes passed and credits earned
4. Better attendance
5. Improved behavior at home and at school
6. Better social skills and adaptation to school

**NOTE:** *It is worth noting that the research specifically mentions that it takes more than just engaged parents to produce high student achievement. However, the benefits identified here are some of the most important for future readiness.*



## TIPS FOR ELEMENTARY PARENTS & FAMILIES

The [Career and College Success division](#) of Denver Public Schools has the following helpful tips for parents and family members of elementary aged students that allow them to support the CCR efforts of their child's educators.

- 1) **Read to your child** every day and / or have them read to you when they are able.
- 2) **Talk with your child** about their day, what they did in school, their homework, and how they like to learn.
- 3) Do your best to make sure your child is **on time to school every day**. Attending school every day has a positive impact on learning for all ages.
- 4) **Work as a partner with your child's teacher(s)** to help support your child's learning and achievement as best you can.
- 5) **Nurture your child's interest and passions**, as these have the potential to become pathways into new learning and possible professions.
- 6) **Talk with your child about their future**. Discuss your hopes and dreams for their future and their own hopes, dreams, and aspirations.
- 7) **Cultivate curiosity**. Children are naturally curious and this trait can be beneficial to them as they age. You can help encourage their curiosity by exploring the world around you - go on walks together, observe a construction site, visit the museum, zoo, or aquarium, or cook a meal together.
- 8) **“Support a growth mindset**: children should be challenged in new ways, pushed to try various skills and activities, and taught to approach mistakes or failures as learning opportunities for next time” (Denver Public Schools, n.d., 'Tips for Elementary Parents & Caregivers' section).

**NOTE:** Although this list was created by Denver Public Schools for their constituents, it is widely applicable information that can be used by your organization to provide support to families and engage them in the CCR efforts of your program.

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## How to Help Your Elementary School Child Explore Careers

### 1. Help them explore their interests.

- Through school subjects or projects
- Through hobbies or extracurricular activities
- Talk with them about their favorite subjects, activities, and what they want to be when they grow up.

### 2. Introduce your child to a variety of careers.

- Watch Day-in-the-Life type videos together on YouTube that feature different careers and discuss how these people work and what their contributions to society are.
  - + Point out the working people you encounter on a daily basis - such as a sales clerk, baker, teacher, police officer, etc. - and explain how important their role is in society at does that person do in their job?
- The following questions are good ones to help guide the conversation with your child:
  - + What does that person do in their job?
  - + Why is this job important?
  - + Is this job something you might like to do one day?

### 3. Help your child develop life and work skills.

- "Encourage your child to make decisions and learn how to resolve problems at every age. Give your child responsibilities, such as planning meals or organizing a family outing, help them to set goals, and work towards achieving them. Teaching your child these habits and skills will help them develop skills for their future career" ([Exploring Future Careers, NYC Department of Education](#)).

### 4. Discuss your own work experiences with your child.

- Talk with them about the different roles you fill at work, how you work with other people, why your job is important
- If possible, take them to work with you for a day to show them what the environment is like and the various responsibilities you and your co-workers carry out in a day



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# How to Help Your Elementary School Child Start Thinking of College

## 1. Talk about college with your child

- Play off their natural curiosity about school and structure and purpose of full-time education that they are encountering as they begin their education journeys
- Talk to them about your time in college, or invite them to speak to relatives and family friends about their experiences as well.
  - + Conversations with as many people as possible about college and career will be beneficial in introducing your child to a variety of opinions and stories about each person's unique experiences.



## 2. Visit a college or university

- Take your children to visit a college campus to help your child become familiar with the idea of what a campus is and what it looks like, this might help them to envision themselves on a college campus when they are older.
- This doesn't have to be in the form of a formal tour of the campus. Instead, look for other opportunities such as going to see a play, checking out a community event or festival held on campus, or simply taking a drive or walk through campus. Many colleges offer summer camps for young children on campus throughout the summer, if you have the means, this may also be a good option.
- If you don't live close to a college or university, sit down with the computer and allow your child to help you navigate through virtual tours of campuses. Encourage them to describe why they are selecting the colleges they pick and talk with them about the different things you see on the virtual visit. Allow them to ask questions and share their opinions about each place. Try one of the following resources:
  - + [You Visit](#)
  - + [The College Tour](#)
  - + [Virtual Tours](#), Princeton Review
  - + [Campus Tours](#)

## 3. Work to strengthen your child's executive skills

- "Executive skills are the mental processes that help us function efficiently and effectively, such as organization, task initiation, emotional control and staying focused. Helping your child strengthen these areas will improve their performance in school and make for a smoother overall path through college and life" ("5 Ways," n.d.)
- Helping children develop good habits such as punctuality, organization, collaboration and cooperation, and time management will help put them on a path to being a good college student

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#### 4. Emphasize the importance of regular attendance

- Attendance is a strong indicator of academic success and talking to your child about the importance of going to school every day is one way that you can help lay a strong foundation on which to build future success.

#### 5. Read to and with your child. Encourage them to read on their own, when they are able.

- Reading can help to build vocabulary and critical thinking skills in children, which will help them as they later prepare for college by taking the SAT/ACT exams and writing college essays.
- Children who practice reading become confident readers which will develop their interests, ignite their imagination, and provide purposeful relaxation.
- Also be sure to be a reading model for your child and let them see you reading, enjoying books, and visiting the library or bookstore.

#### 6. Be involved in your child's education

- Attending parent-teacher conferences, monitoring your child's progress through report cards and progress reports, tracking assignments, and discussing with your child their thoughts, feelings, and experiences at school will help ensure that you are in the loop and keep things from falling through the cracks.
- Expressing an interest in your child's education and academic progress and building connections with them about these pieces will help them to be more invested in their own success.
- Let them know you are proud of them, as long as they do their best and seek out help when they need it. This will go a long way to helping them build confidence in themselves even when they struggle, which will help keep them invested in continuing to make progress.

#### 7. Find enjoyable extracurricular activities for your child to participate in

- Starting this early and allowing your child to try on many different activities (not at once!) in their early years will help them begin to explore their own interests and start to identify their passions.
- Colleges definitely are interested in students who are involved in and passionate about meaningful activities
- Starting this journey early may mean that by the time your child reaches high school, they will be able to enter leadership roles within these activities, such as team captain, editor of the school paper, or soloist in the choir or orchestra.



**\*from [5 Ways to Get Your Elementary Schooler Thinking about College, College? Definitely!](#)**

# COLLEGE & CAREER CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR FAMILIES

Providing discussion questions can be a great way to engage families and by providing a script to parents, you are making it easier for them to start having these conversations with their children. The following questions can be given to parents and families for them to discuss with their children.

**IDEA: If you are implementing a Career & College Week, you can "assign" a set of these questions each day to families as "homework"!**

## MONDAY

### COLLEGE

Where did you go to college? What made you choose that school?

### CAREER

What did you want to be when you were young?

## TUESDAY

### COLLEGE

What was your major / minor? What was your favorite class & why?

### CAREER

What made you decide to go into your current field?

## WEDNESDAY

### COLLEGE

What activities were you involved in during college? Did you work during college?

### CAREER

What skill has been the most valuable to you in your career? Where did you learn that skill?

## THURSDAY

### COLLEGE

Talk about daily college life (where you lived, class schedule, studying, fun activities)

### CAREER

Is continuous / lifelong learning an important part of what you do? Why? How do you continue to learn?

## FRIDAY

### COLLEGE

What are / were some of the traditions at your college? What were the school colors & mascot?

### CAREER

What are the most satisfying parts of your career?

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## Additional Resources for Families

1. [Parental Involvement in Your Child's Education: The Key to Student Success, Research Shows](#), Annie E. Casey Foundation
2. [Exploring Future Careers](#), NYC Public Schools