Teachable Moments -
College Choice Assessment

Use this short assessment to help your child find the right college.

The training program my child is interested in taking is:

_____

This training is available at the following types of schools:

- ❑ Technical college
- ❑ Private career school
- ❑ Two-year college
- ❑ Four-year college or university

The size of school my child would like to attend: (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Small
- ❑ Medium
- ❑ Large

My child would like to attend a school: (Check all that apply)

- ❑ In-state
- ❑ Out-of-state
- ❑ In a small town
- ❑ In a mid-size city
- ❑ In a large city

The college my child attends should offer the following activities (for example - choral group, drama, marching band, student government, student newspaper):

_____
_____
_____
_____

Make a "target" school list. Five to ten schools that meet the preceding criteria are:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

My child will need financial assistance to attend college.

❑ Yes ❑ No

If my child does need financial assistance, his or her "target" schools that offer financial assistance are:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Once you and your child have gathered information about the criteria that are important and have selected five to ten colleges that meet the criteria, visit each school if possible and make a final decision.

This is the beginning of an exciting journey!

For more information:

- Be sure to visit Student Aid on the Web at: http://www.studentaid.ed.gov for more information on preparing for, choosing, applying to, funding, attending and repaying college.

- Locate and visit your state's Career Resource Network Office by visiting: http://www.acrnetwork.org and clicking on "Network."

- Visit the College is Possible website at: http://www.collegeispossible.org for a list of websites, books and brochures that can help with the college search. From the College is Possible homepage, click on "Choosing the Right College" and then "Best Sites and Books."

ACRN

America's Career Resource Network

Finding *the* Right College

A resource guide for families. . .

No Child LEFT BEHIND

This brochure was created using a grant from the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

Where can my Child find College Information?

You and your child should choose a college based on criteria that are important to him or her. When creating an educational plan and choosing a college, you and your child should think about your child's future, and how college will help your child prepare for life after college.

Where do I find information about colleges?
Sending your child to college is a big investment. Here are some ways to help your child choose the right school.

- **Talk to the high school counselor.** Your child's high school counselor is the first stop for information about college options. The counselor can help your child focus on his or her needs and goals and has information about different types of schools. The counselor can also help your child collect or prepare college application materials.
- **Visit a variety of schools.** Schedule visits for you and your child, preferably while classes are being taught. Get a feel for each school; make sure you and your child are comfortable with the facilities, the equipment, the teachers and the students.
- **Do not be afraid to ask.** A good school will happily answer your questions about its programs. Be sure to ask the school about life after college for its students: How many graduate? How many get jobs because of the training they received? What kind of job placement services does the school offer students and graduates?
- **Check the cost.** Make sure the school gives you a clear statement of its tuition and fees. Remember that any federal financial aid you get will be applied first to paying the school's tuition and fees. If there is any money left over, the school may or may not allow you to use the remainder to help your child pay for expenses such as food and housing.

What Training Options are Available to my Child?

There are four types of colleges:

- **Four-year colleges and universities** offer the widest variety of class subjects and levels, from art to zoology, from introductory to advanced courses. They also offer the widest variety of degrees. Tuition at public four-year colleges and universities is less than tuition at private four-year colleges and universities. If your child wants to attend college outside of the state in which you live, tuition at a public four-year college or university will be higher than if your child attended a public college or university within your state.
- **Community colleges** offer three basic kinds of degrees and certificates: academic transfer degrees, professional-technical degrees and certificates of achievement. The academic transfer degree allows your child to complete the first 90 college credits at a community college and then transfer into a four-year college or university at the junior level. The professional-technical degree prepares your child directly for work. The certificate program provides skills for entry into the job market or advancement within a career. Tuition at a community college is less than tuition at a four-year college or university; therefore, attending a community college for two years and transferring to a four-year college or university is one way to save on the cost of college if your child decides to earn a bachelor's degree or a higher degree.
- **Technical colleges** offer two-year degrees and shorter-term certificates in technical programs. Tuition at technical colleges is comparable to tuition at community colleges.
- **Private career colleges** offer specialized, degree or certificate-granting programs. Tuition varies depending on the school and the program, but many programs take less than two years to complete.

How do I help my Child find the Right College?

Important factors to keep in mind when choosing a college:

- **In-State or Out-of-State.** In-state tuition is less expensive than out-of-state. Do colleges within your state offer the degree, activities and other criteria you and your child are looking for?
- **Public or Private.** Public schools generally have less restrictive admission requirements and cost less than private schools. Publicly funded state schools are generally more accessible than private schools. Private schools, however, often offer smaller class sizes and more personalized education.
- **School Size and Class Sizes.** At large universities, your child may be in classes that range from 25 to 500 students. At small colleges, classes usually range from five to 100 people.
- **Student Activities.** You and your child should determine if the colleges and universities you are considering offer activities with which your child would like to get involved.
- **Location**. Is the college located in a rural community, a small town or a city? This can be an important consideration when it comes to housing, transportation and access to off-campus activities.
- **Atmosphere and Physical Surroundings.** Each school has its own atmosphere, which includes the interests and attitudes of the students as well as the physical environment. It may be politically vibrant. It may center on school spirit and tradition, especially around athletics. Collectively decide what atmosphere is best for your child. Visit colleges if possible.
- **Housing Options.** Is it important to you and your child that on-campus housing be available? If your child wishes to live off-campus, will transportation to and from school be accessible and safe?