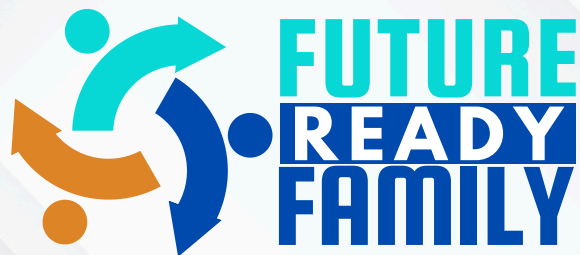




Future Ready Parent Playbook

**Your guide to preparing your child for life
after high school—college, career, or military**

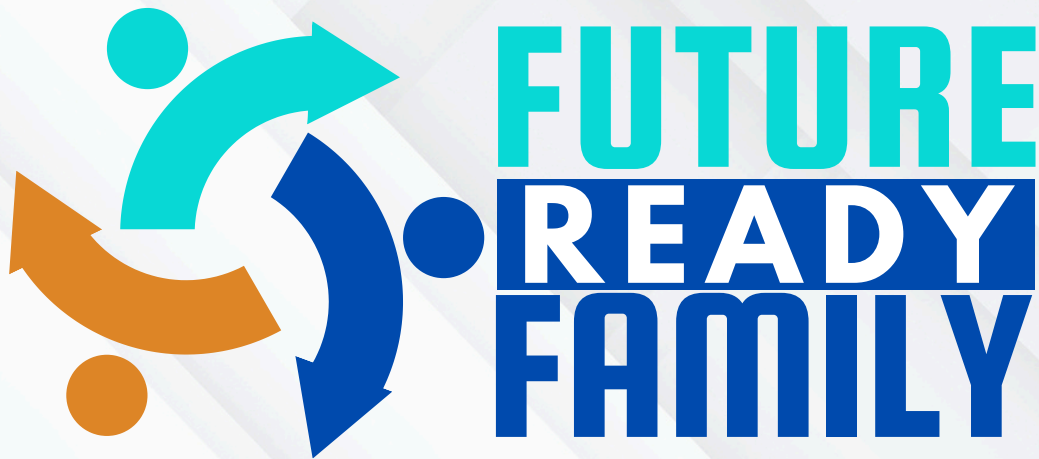


Thank You For Downloading This Toolkit

"If you want something you've never had, you must be willing to do something you've never done."

Thomas Jefferson

This toolkit is designed to help you navigate your child's journey after high school with confidence. Inside, you'll find essential resources, insights, and guidance to support informed decision-making about college, careers, and life readiness. Whether you're just beginning to explore options or looking for specific next steps, this toolkit provides valuable information for every family. The insights and strategies included are meant to serve as a guide—feel free to adapt them to your child's unique needs. With clarity and preparation, you can help your child step into their future with confidence!



About Future Ready Family

Future Ready Family is dedicated to helping parents confidently guide their children through life after high school. Founded by Brandon Foster, an educator, speaker, and former professional athlete with over 15 years in education, Future Ready Family provides practical, unbiased insights on college, careers, and financial independence. With a deep background in college and career readiness, Brandon has helped countless families navigate key decisions about their child's future. As a former Division I athlete and NFL player, he understands the importance of preparation, adaptability, and purpose-driven planning. Through the Future Ready Family Toolkit, parents gain clear, actionable guidance to support their child's transition into adulthood with confidence.

Future Ready Family



FUTURE READY PARENT

About the Author

Brandon Foster is a former NFL player turned educator dedicated to helping parents guide their children toward success after high school. With over 15 years in education and expertise in college, career, and military readiness (CCMR), he equips families with the tools to navigate post-secondary decisions.

A former University of Texas and Indianapolis Colts athlete, Brandon applies lessons of discipline, preparation, and adaptability to his work in student success. As the founder of Future Ready Family, he provides practical resources and expert guidance to help parents confidently prepare their children for college, career, or military pathways.

Brandon Foster

Find me on social:



@FutureReadyFamily

WWW.PARENT.FUTUREREADYFAMILY.COM

What You Can Expect From This Toolkit



Straightforward Guidance, Not Opinions

This toolkit won't tell you what to do but will help you make informed decisions based on facts, real-world data, and your child's unique situation.



Answers to the Big Questions Parents Face

Get clear, unbiased insights on college costs, trade schools, high-demand careers, and how to help your child find their best path.



A Side-by-Side Comparison of Post-High School Options

– Easily compare college, trade school, military, and workforce paths with simple breakdowns of cost, timelines, and return on investment.



Parent-Friendly Career Exploration Tools

Access frameworks, guides, and practical strategies to help your child align their interests with real-world career opportunities.



A Clear Understanding of Financial Independence

Learn how much money your child will need to live on their own, estimate a livable salary, and explore smart financial planning strategies.



A Step-by-Step Action Plan for Parents & Students

Get a customizable checklist to ensure your child takes the right steps before graduation, no matter their chosen path.



Resources to Go Deeper

If you want more, access additional guides, courses, and workshops on career planning, financial literacy, and helping your child transition smoothly into adulthood.

What You'll Learn

01

How to Compare Post-High School Paths – College, trade school, military, or workforce?

02

The True Cost of College – Simple breakdown of tuition, hidden fees, and potential student debt.

03

High-Paying Careers Without a Degree – Discover jobs that pay \$50K+ without a four-year degree.

04

Trade Schools vs. College – Learn when a trade or certification makes more financial sense than a degree.

05

How to Help Your Child Explore Careers – A step-by-step framework for discovering interests and job opportunities.

06

What It Takes to Be Financially Independent – Understand real living costs and how much your child needs to earn.

07

How to Guide Without Micromanaging – Support your child's future without taking over their decisions.

08

Questions Every Parent Should Ask – What to ask school counselors, recruiters, and employers before your child commits to a path.

INTRODUCTION

Table of Contents

01 WHAT PLAYBOOK IS AND IS NOT

02 WHERE ARE YOU NOW?" PARENT SELF-CHECK

03 THE BIG QUESTIONS PARENTS ASK

04 WHAT'S NEXT? HELPING YOUR CHILD TAKE ACTION

05 BONUS RESOURCES

What This Playbook Is & Isn't

As a parent, you want the best for your child's future. But with so many options—college, trade school, military, workforce—how do you know what's right for them? The truth is, there is no single "right" path—only the one that makes the most sense for your child's unique strengths, interests, and financial reality.

That's where this toolkit comes in.

What This Playbook IS:



- **A Resource for Clarity** – Fact-based insights to help you and your child explore post-high school options confidently.
- **A Practical Guide** – Simple breakdowns, decision-making tools, and actionable advice—no fluff.
- **A Conversation Starter** – Helps you talk with your child about their future without pressure.
- **A Support System for Parents** – Empowers you with knowledge, not overwhelm.
- **A Flexible Tool for Any Path** – Covers college, trade school, military, and workforce options.

What This Playbook ISN'T:

- **A One-Size-Fits-All Plan** – This isn't a checklist that tells you exactly what to do. Every student is different, and this guide respects that.
- **A Sales Pitch for College** – While college is a great option for some, it's not the only path. This guide covers all post-high school options without bias.
- **A Replacement for Personal Decision-Making** – This toolkit equips you with knowledge, but you and your child must ultimately decide what's best for their future.
- **A Guarantee of Success** – No toolkit can predict the future. But by using this resource, you'll be better prepared to guide your child toward an informed and meaningful decision.



Bottom Line:

This toolkit won't tell you what to do—it helps you make informed choices for your child's future.

Where Are You Now?" Parent Self-Check

Instructions for Parents: Find your child's grade below and follow the recommendations to get the most out of this toolkit.

6TH - 8TH GRADE

Early Exploration Phase

Your Child's Stage

- ✓ Just beginning to explore careers & interests.
- ✓ Needs exposure to different career paths, skills, and post-high school option
- ✓ No pressure yet—this is about curiosity and exploration.

Key Actions

- Encourage extracurriculars and hobbies (robotics, sports, coding, music).
- Take career interest quizzes (O*NET, 16 Personalities).
- Visit career fairs and summer programs.
- Introduce the concept of college, trade schools, and workforce without pressure.

9TH - 10TH GRADE

Career Exploration & Early Preparation

Your Child's Stage

- ✓ Starting to think about post-high school options, but may not know what they want yet.
- ✓ Should begin exploring high school coursework, career pathways, and financial planning.

Key Actions

- Choose electives that align with potential career interests (STEM, business, arts).
- Consider CTE (Career & Technical Education) classes or dual credit courses.
- Visit college campuses, trade schools, and military recruiter events.
- Research potential scholarships and start building a résumé.

11TH GRADE

Decision-Making Phase

Your Child's Stage

- ✓ Now is the time to narrow down choices and prepare for applications
- ✓ Needs a clear action plan for college, trade school, military, or workforce.

Key Actions

- Take the SAT/ACT or ASVAB (for military-bound students).
- Start FAFSA & scholarship applications.
- Research degree costs vs. salary potential for careers of interest.
- Connect with school counselors, college reps, and potential employers.

12TH GRADE

Action & Transition Phase

Your Child's Stage

- ✓ Finalizing decisions and preparing for post-high school life.
- ✓ Needs to complete applications, make financial choices, and plan for transition.

Key Actions

- Submit college, trade school, or military applications.
- Finalize financial aid, housing, and career certifications.
- Practice job interviews and networking.
- Prepare for life skills (budgeting, time management, independence).

How to Use This Playbook to Get Clear Answers

01



Start with the Big Questions

Each section answers key questions parents face—Is college worth it? What about trade schools? What careers pay well? Read through these sections to get clear, unbiased insights.

02



Use the Decision-Making Tools

The toolkit includes easy-to-use comparison charts, career guides, and planning exercises to help you weigh options and make informed choices with your child.

03



Have Open Conversations with Your Child

Use the insights and tools to guide discussions, rather than making decisions for them. Ask questions, listen, and explore options together.

04



Focus on What Fits Your Child Best

There's no single "right" path—only the one that aligns with your child's interests, strengths, and financial reality. Customize the resources in this toolkit to fit their journey.

05



Get Actionable Next Steps

The final section provides a customizable checklist and key questions to ask school counselors, employers, and recruiters—helping your child take real action before graduation.

06



Explore Additional Resources

If you want a deeper dive into career planning, financial literacy, or alternative pathways, check out the paid guides and workshops for more tailored support.

 Want a deeper dive? This toolkit gives you an overview, but if you want step-by-step guidance on post-high school success, check out our Future Ready Family Resource Hub

SECTION 01

FUTURE READY PARENT PLAYBOOK

**HOW PARENTS CAN HELP
THEIR CHILD NAVIGATE LIFE
AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

The Essential Parent's Guide to
Post-High School Success

The Big Questions Parents Ask



02



The 5 Big Questions Parents Ask



01 Is College Worth It?



02 What About Trade Schools?



03 What about the Military?



04 How Can I Guide My Child Into Meaningful Careers?



05 What If My Child Doesn't Know What They Want to Do?



SECTION 02

IS COLLEGE WORTH IT?

Is College Worth It?

The Short Answer

College can be a great investment, but **it's not always the best choice for every student**. The key is understanding the **cost, earning potential, and job opportunities** before committing to a degree.

Breaking It Down: The Cost of College

Average Total Cost of College

- Community College (In-State): \$3,860
- Public 4-Year College (In-State): \$27,146
- Public 4-Year College (Out-of-State): \$45,708
- Private 4-Year College: \$58,628



Hidden Costs

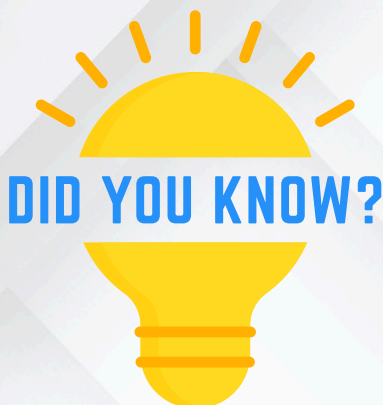
- Books
- Housing
- Food
- Transportation
- Student fees

Total Cost for a 4-Year Degree (Before Aid & Loans)

- Public In-State: \$108,584
- Public Out-of-State: \$182,832
- Private: \$234,512

Cost of Degree does not account for potential lost income, student loan interest, nor moving expenses.

Data from: [EducationData.org](https://educationdata.org).

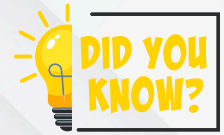


DID YOU KNOW?

44 million Americans have student loan debt, and the average borrower takes **20 years** to pay off loans.

What College Really Gets You: Degree vs. No Degree Salaries

Education Level	Median Annual Salary
No High School Diploma	\$36,816 (\$708 weekly)
High School Diploma	\$46,748 (\$899 weekly)
Some College, No Degree	\$51,584 (\$992 weekly)
Associate's Degree (2 Year Degree)	\$55,016 (\$1,058 weekly)
Bachelors Degree (4 Year Degree)	\$77,636 (\$1,493 weekly)
Master's Degree	\$90,324 (\$1,737 weekly)
Doctoral Degree	\$109,668 (\$2,109 weekly)



People with a **Bachelor's degree** earn about **\$1 million more** over a lifetime than those with just a high school diploma.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

When College Makes Sense (And When It Doesn't)

College is a **Good** Investment If:



- The degree leads to high-paying, high-growth careers (STEM, Healthcare, Business).
- The student receives financial aid, scholarships, or grants to minimize debt.
- The student is committed to finishing a degree (not dropping out halfway).

College **Might Not** Be the Best Choice If:



- The degree has low job demand or low salary potential (some liberal arts majors).
- The student is unsure about their career path and taking on debt.
- A trade school, apprenticeship, or industry certification leads to a better-paying job with less debt.

Takeaway

College **can** be worth it, but only if the degree justifies the cost.



What About Trade Schools?

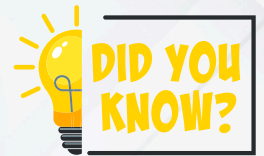
What About Trade Schools?

The Short Answer

Trade schools offer **faster, cheaper, and job-focused** education. Many careers in **skilled trades, technology, and healthcare** pay well without a degree.

What Trade Schools Offer vs. Traditional College

Factor	Trade School	4-Year College
Cost	\$5K-%20K	\$80k-\$230k
Time to Complete	6 months-2 years	4+ years
Job Readiness	Hands-on, job-ready training	Broad education, may require more schooling
Salary	\$40K - \$80K+	Varies Widely
Debt Risk	Low	High



40% of college grads work jobs that don't require a degree.

High-Paying Skilled Trades & Certifications (No Degree Required!)

Career	Median Salary	Training Time
Electrician	\$60,040	1-2 years
HVAC Technician	\$53,410	6 months - 2 years
Plumber	\$59,880	1-2 years
Welders	\$48,756	1-2 years
Patient Care Tech	45,056	1-2 years
Dental Hygienist	\$81,400	2 years
CDL Truck Driver	\$50,340	1-2 years

Takeaway

Trade schools and certifications **lead to well-paying jobs** without the high debt of college

Success Spotlight: Real Stories



Gabriel Saucedo – Building Success in the Trades

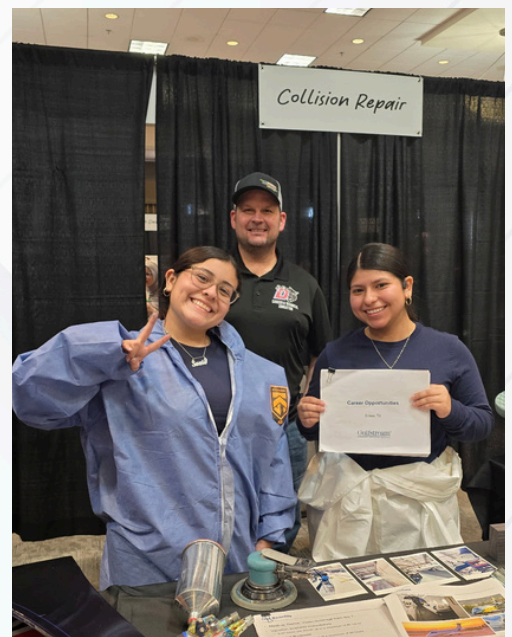
When Gabriel Saucedo graduated high school, he knew the traditional four-year college path wasn't for him. Instead, he pursued a trade school program to earn his HVAC license, setting himself up for a high-demand career in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. Now, as a licensed HVAC technician, Gabriel is financially independent, earning \$50,000+ annually, and has a clear path for career growth. His journey proves that success comes in many forms—and for Gabriel, choosing a skilled trade was the key to building a stable and rewarding future.

The Saucedo Family

Class of 2024 Grads – Certified for Success in the Workforce

These c/o 2024 were thinking ahead in high school, enrolling in automotive technology courses that led to an industry certification in painting. Before even walking the stage at graduation, they both secured high-paying jobs with Boeing, applying their specialized skills in the aviation industry. Now, as aircraft painters, they earn competitive salaries, gain hands-on experience, and work for one of the biggest names in aerospace. Their story proves that CTE certifications can be a direct path to a thriving career—right out of high school.

-Former High school students





SECTION 02

What About the Military?



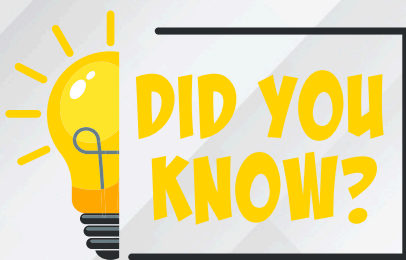
What About the Military?

The Short Answer

The military offers **structured career paths, education benefits, and leadership training**. It can be a strong option for students seeking discipline, financial stability, and career development while serving their country.

Key Benefits of Military Service:

- ✓ **Tuition Assistance & GI Bill** – Covers college costs, trade school programs, and certifications.
 - ✓ **Career Training** – Hands-on experience in high-demand fields.
 - ✓ **Steady Pay & Benefits** – Includes housing, healthcare, and retirement plans.
 - ✓ **Leadership & Discipline** – Builds teamwork, responsibility, and decision-making skills.
 - ✓ **Travel & Global Experience** – Opportunities to work in different locations worldwide.
-



Approximately 79% of enlisted military personnel **receive tuition assistance**, allowing them to earn degrees with **little to no student debt!**

Takeaway

The military is more than just combat—it provides career training, financial security, and long-term growth opportunities.

Branches of the U.S. Military & Their Opportunities



U.S. Army

- Largest branch with diverse career options.
- **Specialties:** Engineering, Medical, Cybersecurity, Intelligence, Logistics.
- Offers Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard options.



U.S. Navy

- Focuses on maritime operations, technology, and global defense.
- **Specialties:** Aviation, Nuclear Energy, Medical, IT, Mechanics.
- Deploys worldwide with strong travel opportunities.



U.S. AIR FORCE

U.S. Air Force

- Dominates in air, space, and cyber operations.
- **Specialties:** Piloting, Cybersecurity, Engineering, Space Systems, Communications.
- Offers strong college tuition programs and technical training.



U.S. Marine Corps

- Rapid-response force with elite training.
- **Specialties:** Infantry, Reconnaissance, Aviation, Logistics, Intelligence.
- Builds leadership, physical endurance, and combat readiness.



U.S. Coast Guard

- Focuses on maritime law enforcement, search & rescue, and environmental protection.
- **Specialties:** Rescue operations, Ship Maintenance, Homeland Security, Navigation.
- Protects U.S. waters with domestic-based missions.



U.S. Space Force

- The newest branch, focusing on space defense and technology.
- **Specialties:** Satellite operations, Cyber Defense, Intelligence, Engineering.
- Ideal for students interested in high-tech and aerospace careers.

Family Spotlight: Real Stories

Khamai Foster – A Strategic Path Through the Navy

In high school, Khami Foster was a student-athlete, balancing academics and sports while thinking about his future. Though he had the academics for college, he knew it wasn't the best financial option for him. Instead, Khami saw the military as a strategic way to gain career skills without student debt. With high ASVAB scores, he secured an IT position in the U.S. Navy, receiving top-tier technical training and hands-on experience. Now, as he graduates from Navy, Khami is on a high-tech career path in cybersecurity and IT, proving that success isn't about following the traditional route—it's about choosing the path that works for you.

The Foster Family





SECTION 02

How Can I Guide My Child Into Meaningful Careers?



How Can I Guide My Child Into Meaningful Careers?

The Short Answer

Parents don't need to have all the answers. The goal is to **help your child discover their interests, strengths, and career options**—while making informed financial decisions.

3 Best Ways to Help Your Child Explore Interests & Strengths

Career & Personality Assessments

Have them take interest and strength-based quizzes:

- O*NET Interest Profiler (career matching)
- 16 Personalities Career Quiz (work style insights)
- ASVAB Career Exploration Program (great for military-bound students)
 - Discuss the results and connect them to real career paths.



Why It Works: These tools give students direction by aligning careers with their natural strengths.

Encourage Exploration Without Pressure

Have them take interest and strength-based quizzes:

- Let them try different electives, clubs, or extracurriculars (robotics, music, debate, etc.).
- Support side projects or hobbies (coding, art, entrepreneurship).
- Avoid forcing a set career path—help them explore freely.



Why It Works: Hands-on experiences build confidence and allow them to develop their strengths naturally.

Leverage School Opportunities & Campus Visits

Have them take interest and strength-based quizzes:

- Encourage them to take advantage of career & technical education (CTE) courses, dual credit, or AP classes to explore different subjects.
- Attend college, trade school, and military recruiter visits hosted by their school.
- Explore career fairs, on-campus workshops, and job exploration events offered by the school district.



Why It Works: Schools provide free access to career exploration resources, helping students experience different paths without commitment or cost..

How Can I Guide My Child Into Meaningful Careers?

Consider Future Job Demand & Salary

Industries With High Growth & Strong Salaries



- ✓ Healthcare – Nursing, Physical Therapy, Dental Hygienist
- ✓ Technology – Cybersecurity, Software Development, Data Analytics
- ✓ Skilled Trades – Electrician, HVAC, Plumbing, Welding
- ✓ Logistics & Transportation – CDL Truck Driver, Aviation
- ✓ Finance & Business – Financial Analyst, Accounting, Real Estate

Parents should ask

- ✓ What jobs are in demand in our area? (Check local workforce trends.)
- ✓ What industries are growing nationwide? (Check [CareerOneStop](https://www.careeronestop.org/) for job outlook data.)



What **NOT** to do

- ✗ Push a career just because it pays well if your child has no interest in it.
- ✗ Assume that college = success—some careers don't require a degree and still pay well.

Takeaway

Help your child explore careers by connecting their interests to real opportunities, balancing passion with practicality, and encouraging exploration without pressure.



SECTION 02

What If My Child Doesn't Know What They Want to Do?



What If My Child Doesn't Know What They Want to Do?

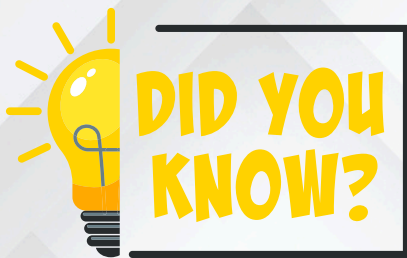
The Short Answer

It's **completely normal** for a student **not to have everything figured out** by graduation. Parents can **guide them through exploration without pressuring them**.

Option 1: Explore Multiple Career Paths Before Committing

Some students need extra time to discover what interests them.

- ✓ **Internships & Part-Time Jobs** – Experience different industries without commitment.
 - ✓ **Community College First** – A low-cost way to earn general education credits while deciding on a career.
 - ✓ **Apprenticeships & Work-Based Learning** – Earn while learning skills on the job.
 - ✓ **Trade Schools or Certificate Programs** – Short-term, high-pay job training without long-term debt.
-



About **30-40%** of high school graduates delay college or career training because they're unsure what to pursue, making career exploration and gap year planning valuable options!

Option 2: Consider a Gap Year

(The Right Way)

Good Reasons



Career & Education Clarity

Taking time to explore interests through internships, job shadowing, or volunteering can help students make a more informed career or college choice.



Financial Readiness

Working for a year allows students to save money, reducing future college debt or helping fund trade school expenses.



Personal Growth & Maturity

A gap year can build independence, problem-solving skills, and responsibility, making students more prepared for adulthood.



Gaining Real-World Experience

Learning life skills like budgeting, time management, and workplace professionalism can provide a strong foundation for future success.

Bad Reasons



No Clear Plan

Without a structured plan (work, volunteering, or skill-building), a gap year can turn into wasted time.



Avoiding Responsibility

If a gap year is just an excuse to do nothing, it can lead to a lack of direction and lost momentum.




Risk of Losing Motivation

Many students struggle to return to school or career training after a year away, making re-entry challenging.



Financial Instability

Without a job or structured plan, a gap year can add financial strain rather than provide a stepping stone toward independence.

A space shuttle is shown launching, ascending vertically against a clear blue sky. A massive, bright orange and white plume of fire and smoke billows from the base of the shuttle, extending down to a body of water in the foreground. The water reflects the intense light from the launch. In the background, a green shoreline with some industrial structures is visible.

SECTION 03

**FUTURE READY
PARENT PLAYBOOK
HELPING YOUR
CHILD TAKE
ACTION**

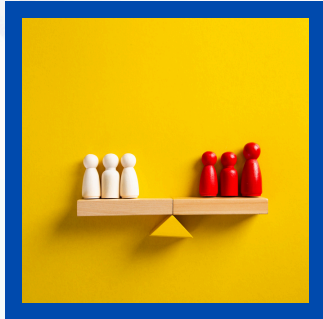
The Essential Parent's Guide to
Post-High School Success



SECTION 03

The Parent's Role How to Guide Without Micromanaging

How to Guide Without Micromanaging



✓ The Balance Between Support & Independence

As parents, the goal is to provide guidance without making decisions for them. Instead of controlling, help them develop confidence and decision-making skills.



Signs of Over-Micromanaging

- Doing all the research and applications for your child
- Pushing a specific career path without considering their interests
- Making major financial decisions (college loans, job offers) without their input

✓ Better Approach: Coaching Instead of Controlling

Controlling	Coaching
"You have to go to college."	"Let's compare options and see what's best for you."
"You need to study engineering."	"I noticed you're great at problem-solving, do you want to explore engineering?"
"I'll handle your job applications."	"Let's review your applications together so you feel confident."
"You're not joining the military. It's too dangerous."	"Let's talk to a recruiter and explore the benefits and commitments."
"You're going into business because it pays well."	"You seem interested in entrepreneurship let's research business careers and other options."
"College is too expensive, so you're going straight to work."	"If cost is a concern, let's look at scholarships, trade schools, and community college options."
"If you don't go to college, you'll struggle in life."	"Let's look at career paths with and without a degree so you can make an informed choice."

Takeaway

Your child **needs your guidance**, but also **needs to take ownership** of their future.

Key Questions to Ask School Counselors, Employers, and Recruiters

✓ Talking to School Counselors (College & Career Planning)

- ✓ What scholarships does my child qualify for?
 - ✓ What dual credit or AP courses are available to reduce college costs?
 - ✓ What are the best local internship or job-shadowing opportunities?
 - ✓ Does my child qualify for industry certifications before graduation?
 - ✓ What's the timeline for college applications, FAFSA, and SAT/ACT tests?
-

✓ Talking to Employers & Career Mentors (If considering workforce entry)

- ✓ What skills or certifications do you look for in entry-level employees?
 - ✓ Are there paid apprenticeships or training programs available?
 - ✓ What's the best way for a high school graduate to stand out in job applications?
 - ✓ How can my child gain work experience while still in school?
-

✓ Talking to Military Recruiters (If considering enlistment)

- ✓ What ASVAB score is needed for different military roles?
- ✓ What educational and job training benefits does the military offer?
- ✓ Can my child combine military service with college funding?
- ✓ What does a typical career path look like in this branch of the military?

Takeaway

Parents should **empower their child to ask these questions directly** while also helping them **understand the answers and make informed decisions**.

Steps to Take Before Graduation

General Steps for All Students

- ✓ Discuss career interests & strengths – Use career quizzes, job shadowing, or mentorship.
- ✓ Research job market trends – Explore high-demand, high-wage careers.
- ✓ Develop soft skills – Encourage communication, time management, and professionalism.
- ✓ Set up a professional email & LinkedIn profile – First impressions matter!

01. College Pathway Checklist

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take the SAT/ACT (if needed) – Understand score requirements. | <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for FAFSA & scholarships – Begin financial planning early. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research college majors & ROI – Compare degree costs vs. salary potential. | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit campuses & apply to multiple colleges – Expand options. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm housing, tuition plans, and orientation dates | |

02. Trade School Pathway Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research certification programs – Look at costs, length, and job demand. | <input type="checkbox"/> Check licensing requirements – Some careers require additional state exams. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apply to trade schools or apprenticeships – Compare programs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Network with professionals – Seek mentors or part-time work in the field. |

03. Workforce Pathway Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build a résumé & cover letter – Focus on skills, school projects, or part-time jobs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for entry-level jobs – Start early & apply to multiple places |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice job interviews – Use mock interviews or online coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Consider certification programs – Boost qualifications for higher-paying roles. |

04. Military Pathway Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with a recruiter – Ask detailed questions about benefits, job roles, and contracts. | <input type="checkbox"/> Take the ASVAB test – Determine qualifying military careers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research military career paths – Understand training, pay, and long-term benefits. | <input type="checkbox"/> Review enlistment commitments – Discuss expectations, travel, and service length. |



FUTURE READY PARENT PLAYBOOK

BONUS RESOURCES

Now that you've read through the toolkit, it's
time to take action!

Use these interactive tools to help guide your
child through their post-high school journey.

The Essential Parent's Guide to
Post-High School Success

Guided Conversation Worksheet

01

What's something you enjoy doing so much that you lose track of time?

03

What are you most curious about learning in high school or beyond?

02

If you could try any job for one day, what would it be?

04

Do you prefer working alone, in small teams, or with large groups?

05

What's more important to you: a job that pays well or a job you love

07

What's one skill you'd like to get better at?

06

What do you think about college, trade school, or military service?

08

Have you ever thought about what kind of work you'd like to do in the future? What comes to mind?

09

What is more important to you: a job that pays well or a job you truly enjoy?

11

What are your thoughts on college, trade school, or joining the workforce right after high school?

10

Are there any careers you know about that sound exciting to you?

12

Would you rather learn through hands-on experiences, online courses, or in a classroom setting? Why?

13

Have you heard of apprenticeships, internships, or job shadowing? Would you be interested in trying one?

15

Who is someone (a teacher, mentor, or family member) you can talk to for career advice?

14

What is one thing you can do this year to explore a career you're interested in?

16

Would you like to visit a college, trade school, or workplace to see what it's like? If so, where?

17

What are three things you value most in a future job? (Examples: flexibility, creativity, helping others, working outdoors, high salary, etc.)

Post-High School Decision Scorecard

Helping Your Child Compare Their Options

Instructions: Use this scorecard to compare different post-high school paths based on key factors. Review each category and check the boxes that align with your child's priorities. This will help guide an informed decision.

01. Key Decision Factors: Which factors matter most to your child? Check all that apply

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of education/training | <input type="checkbox"/> Earning potential | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits (healthcare, retirement, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time to complete | <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on learning opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for advancement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job availability & demand | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility & work-life balance | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel opportunities |

Comparing the Options

Factor	4 year College	Community College	Trade School	Military	Workforce (Job After HS)
Time Commitment	4+ year	2 year	6 months-2 years	4+ years	Immediate
Average Cost	\$80K - \$200K	\$5K - \$20K	\$5K - \$20K	\$0 (Paid Service)	\$0 (May need training)
Earning Potential	\$50K - \$120K+	\$40K - \$80K+	\$40K - \$80K+	\$35K - \$80K+	\$25K - \$50K+
Job Security	Varies by major	Good	High	High	Low
Best for Students Who...	Like academics, want a degree	Want affordable education	Prefer hands-on work	Want structure & benefits	Want to start earning quickly
Key Consideration	High debt risk, need scholarships	Shorter training, job-ready	Shorter training, job-ready	Requires commitment	May need skills training

Based on the table above, which option(s) seem like a good fit? Check all that apply.

- ☐ 4 year College ☐ Community College ☐ Trade School ☐ Military ☐ Workforce

Who can help with this decision? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Family member ☐ Counselor ☐ Career Coach ☐ Military Recruiter ☐ College Admission Officer

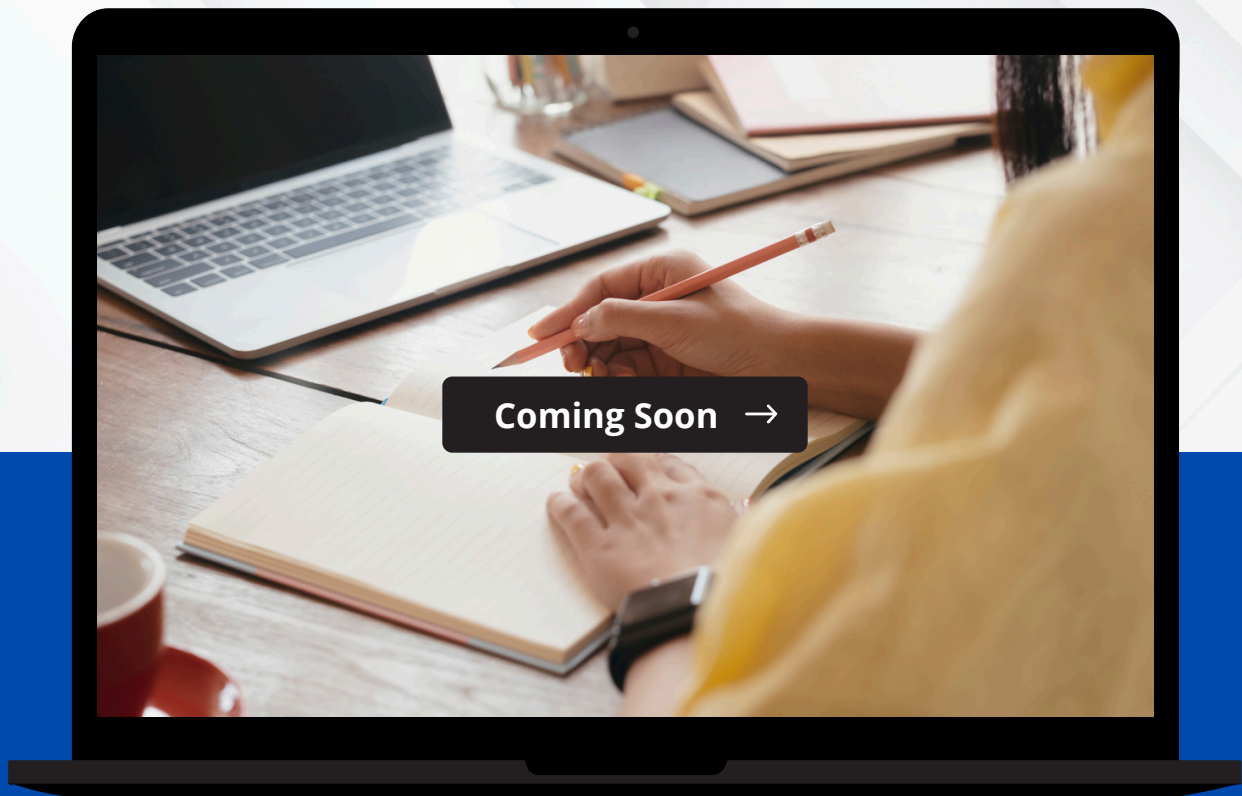
01

Final Thoughts

What are your child's biggest questions or concerns about their choice?

Answer:


Premium eCourses Coming Soon!



Take the guesswork out of planning your child's future! Our expert-designed e-course gives parents the tools, insights, and strategies to confidently guide their child toward the right post-high school path—whether it's college, trade school, military, or the workforce. Get step-by-step guidance, real-world examples, and exclusive resources to make informed decisions with ease.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- ✓ The Complete Future Ready Parent Roadmap
- ✓ Mastering Post-High School Planning: A Parent's Guide
- ✓ The Parent's Guide to College & Career
- ✓ Career Exploration & High-Demand Jobs Breakdown
- ✓ Step-by-Step Action Plans & Interactive Checklists
- ✓ Bonus: Parent Support & Coaching Community



Thank You

So, what's next?

- ✓ **Start the Conversation** – Talk with your child about their interests, strengths, and future goals. Use the tools in this guide to explore possible paths together.
- ✓ **Connect with School & Career Resources** – Reach out to counselors, college reps, trade programs, or military recruiters to gather more information about the best-fit options.
- ✓ **Make a Plan & Take Action** – Use the checklists and decision-making tools to outline clear next steps before graduation.
- ✓ **Stay Informed & Keep Exploring** – The job market, education costs, and career opportunities are always evolving. Continue researching and adapting to help your child make the best choices.

Want More Support?

We're here to help! Check out additional resources, guides, and upcoming webinars designed to help parents **navigate post-high school success with confidence.**

- Visit: Future Ready Parent www.parent.futurereadyfamily.com
- Join Our Parent Community
- Get More Resources online