



# EDUCATIONAL PLANNING GUIDE FOR **FOSTER YOUTH**

Helping California's Foster Youth Access Higher Education and  
Reach Their Educational Goals



## EDUCATIONAL PLANNING GUIDE FOR FOSTER YOUTH

This guide is designed as a tool for foster youths and their caregivers during the transition into college. This list is a compilation of programs and resources that can assist foster youths and their caregivers in preparing to enter higher education.

### GET ORGANIZED:

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- Start a binder to place all information related to college.
- Keep copies of test scores and/or write down dates of tests taken.
- Save your log-in name and passwords for online registration, etc.

### 6TH, 7TH & 8TH GRADE

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- Talk to your school counselor about courses that will prepare you for college and create an academic plan to take college preparatory courses. Also check out “How to Get to College” at [www.gotocalstate.com](http://www.gotocalstate.com)
- Have guardians attend the education planning night at the middle school where local high school counselors present their programs and schedules.
- Obtain the College Preparatory (a-g) course list at [www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu) or [www.ucop.edu](http://www.ucop.edu).
- Take a language other than English.
- Begin your Student Planner at [www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu) or at [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu).
- Participate in career awareness and career exploration activities.
- Take English and Algebra 1 or another rigorous math course and aim for good grades.

### 9TH GRADE - FRESHMEN

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- Meet with your high school counselor.
- Take the “a-g” courses listed to meet the CSU’s and UC admissions requirements:
  - Algebra I or Geometry
  - College prep English
  - Foreign language
- Aim for As and Bs in all your classes; focus on homework and develop good study skills.
- Take the ACT EXPLORE exam, a tool that helps you plan for high school and college.
- Begin or update your High School Course Planner on [www.CSUMentor.edu](http://www.CSUMentor.edu) or [www.californiacollges.edu](http://www.californiacollges.edu)
- Create a file to keep copies of report cards, records of honors and awards, and lists of extracurricular activities, clubs or sports involvement at school, volunteer work, community service, and paid employment.

### 10TH GRADE - SOPHOMORES

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- Talk with your guardians about your educational choices and review your course load. Make sure you are satisfying high school graduation and college entrance requirements.
- Take Geometry or Algebra II.
- Take college prep English.
- Visit college campuses and attend college fairs.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

There are three segments of public higher education in California—the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC). In addition, there is a wide range of independent colleges in the state. To learn more about these options, visit [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu).

- Take the PLAN and PSAT, exams that help you prepare for the ACT and SAT and keep you on track for college.
- Take elective courses from the “a-g” course list: History, English, math, visual and performing arts, laboratory science, and a foreign language.
- Update your High School Course Planner on **www.CSUMentor.edu**.
- If you are interested in attending a selective college, register for the AP (Advance Placement) test, honors, and advanced courses for 11th grade, if available.
- Take part in enrichment programs and summer workshops and camps in subjects like music, science, engineering, writing, filmmaking, and others.
- Participate in career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation activities.
- Find out about career-related and occupational programs at your high school and sign up for those that interest you.
- Prepare for and participate in a summer internship.

### **11TH GRADE- JUNIORS**

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- Review with your counselor your academic record and strengthen any weakness or problem areas.
- Students taking AP classes: Register to take the AP exam in the spring. You can earn college credit for AP courses if you score well on the test(s). Ask your counselor about a fee waiver.
- Take advanced math and college prep English: Algebra II or advanced math and English (writing and critical reading)
- Update your High School Course Planner on **www.CSUMentor.edu** or **www.californiacolleges.edu**.

### **HOUSING**

- Former foster youth can receive priority in college housing, and some students can stay on campus year-round including holiday breaks.
- Transitional housing programs offer safe and affordable options for youth attending college or career technical training. For more information, ask you ILP Coordinator or county social worker.

- Take the EAP exam to find out if you are ready for college-level math and English courses. Visit [www.csusuccess.org](http://www.csusuccess.org).
- Register for the PSAT, a practice exam for the SAT, if you didn't take it in 10th grade.
- Register for the SAT or the ACT at least one month before the exam. Many CSU campuses require you to take the SAT by October of your senior year. Acquire fee waiver code from the high school counseling office.
- Attend college fairs and college planning sessions with your guardian.
- Attend financial aid information sessions at your high school, Independent Living Program, or local colleges.
- Select courses for your senior year that strengthen your academic record and ensure that you meet the "a-g" requirements.
- Check your transcript at the end of the year to make sure it is correct.
- Use spring break or summer vacation to tour college campuses. Have questions prepared in advance and take notes on your visits.
- Explore careers by taking a summer job or job shadowing in your field of interest.
- Participate in career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation activities.
- Identify educational goals and schools consistent with your career interests.
- Prepare for and participate in a summer internship or work experience.

### **12TH GRADE - SENIORS**

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- Review courses with your school counselor to make sure you are meeting high school graduation and entrance requirements for the colleges that interest you.
- Complete all final "a-g" course requirements, including advanced math and college prep English. Trigonometry or Analytic Geometry/Calculus are also recommended.
- If your EAP test results indicate that you are "Ready-Conditional" for college-level Mathematics, you are required to take a 12th grade math course with a prerequisite of Algebra II and earn a grade of "C" or better to maintain your exemption.

- ❑ If you are planning on attending a California Community College please visit the CSU's website for transfer pathways: [www.calstate.edu/transfer/roadmaps](http://www.calstate.edu/transfer/roadmaps).
- ❑ If your EAP test results indicate that you are "Not Yet Ready" for college-level math or English courses, visit the Early Assessment Program website at [www.collegeeap.org](http://www.collegeeap.org) to practice your math or English skills. This may increase your chances of passing the CSU's placement tests.
- ❑ Identify three individuals who can write a strong recommendation letter for you and get the letters by November 15.
- ❑ Finish your personal essay for college admission. Include information about your foster care experience in your personal statement. The personal essay will be used to complete the EOP application, UC application, and scholarship applications.
- ❑ Search for scholarship money using the scholarship search function at [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu).
- ❑ Attend ILP workshops, college fairs, college planning sessions, and financial aid information sessions.
- ❑ Narrow your choices of colleges. Many students select three to five schools to apply to—their "dream" school, their "safety" school, and two to three other choices.
- ❑ **Early September:**  
Register for the October SAT or ACT.
- ❑ **October 1-November 30:**  
Apply to the CSU ([www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu)) and/or UC ([www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions)). If you regularly update your "Student Planner", your course information will be automatically transferred to your application. Application deadline is November 30, unless otherwise noted.

- Don't forget to press the submit button on your college application and ALWAYS print out copies of applications submitted online.
- Double check your transcript to make sure all the information is correct.
- Have your high school transcript sent to requesting colleges. Be sure to have multiple copies of your transcript and save one copy for yourself.
- Apply for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), [www.csumentor.edu/planning/eop](http://www.csumentor.edu/planning/eop).
- Apply for on campus housing for each college campus that you are applying to and place your name on the waitlist, if needed. Some colleges call their campus housing "dorms," while others call them "residence halls."
- Check with your social worker or caregivers about the payments and deposits for college. Some colleges require an upfront deposit for on-campus housing and only accept checks or credit cards.
- Apply for scholarships and campus support programs like the Guardian Scholars and Renaissance Scholars. Visit [www.calstate.edu/FosterYouth](http://www.calstate.edu/FosterYouth) to learn more.

## **12TH GRADE | SPRING SEMESTER**

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- January-March:**  
Apply for financial aid January 1 through March 2! ([www.fasfa.ed.gov](http://www.fasfa.ed.gov))
- March-May:**  
Prior to enrolling, register for the CSU's ELM and EPT exams (unless you are exempt).
- Late Spring:**  
Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes should take the AP exams. You can earn early college credit for AP courses if you score well on the test(s). Have the scores sent to the schools where you are applying.
- Get a FAFSA PIN (Personal Identification Number) at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- Check to see that your school sent your Cal Grant GPA Verification form.
- If you are planning to attend a community college, take any placement tests required by the school you will attend.

- Pay a nonrefundable deposit for freshman tuition to the college you plan to attend, if required, to hold your spot.
- Apply online for the Chafee Grant at [www.chafee.csac.ca.gov](http://www.chafee.csac.ca.gov). Grants are for eligible foster youth ages 16 to 22 of the award year for up to \$5,000 to assist with job training and college tuition.
- Ask your school counselor to send your final high school transcript to the college you will attend.
- Obtain a copy of your ward of the court letter from your social worker.

### WHAT ARE THE "A-G" REQUIREMENTS?

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The California State University and the University of California requires the college preparatory pattern of classes referred to as the "a-g" courses for admission.

- a** History and Social Science  
2 years (1 year of U.S. History and 1 year of Social Science)
- b** English  
4 years required
- c** Math  
3 years (4 years recommended)
- d** Laboratory Science: 2 years with a lab class
- e** Language (Foreign Language): 2 years of the same language
- f** Visual and Performing Arts: 1 year
- g** College Preparatory Elective: 1 year of any college preparatory subject

Visit your school counselor for a detailed list of classes or visit [www.gotocsu.com](http://www.gotocsu.com)

### COLLEGE IS POSSIBLE

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#### Why Go

A college degree can open doors to careers where you can earn more money.



Before college:  
**\$26,000**



After college:  
**\$65,000**

#### How to Pay

There are many financial aid programs to help former foster youth pay for college or career/technical training.

#### What's Available

Grants, work study, and loans can add up to almost \$12,000 at a community college, \$16,000 at a CSU, and more than \$20,000 at a UC school.



## TESTS YOU NEED TO TAKE

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- The California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) is a requirement for high school graduation in California, created by the California Department of Education to improve the academic performance of California high school students, and especially of high school graduates, in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics; public school students must pass the exam before they can receive a high school diploma, regardless of any other graduation requirements.
- The PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test) and PLAN are optional practice tests designed to prepare for the mandatory college admissions tests— SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test), ACT (American College Test), and others.
- The Early Assessment Program (EAP) is an academic preparation program to help 11th grade students meet college readiness standards in English and mathematics before admission to a CSU campus.

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

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- Allow for sufficient time to complete online application forms and paper application forms.
- Keep a record of your user ID and password for the online application.
- Identify yourself as a foster youth by marking yes on the question asking if you are a “orphan or ward of the court or foster youth” on the UC, CSU, and community college admissions application, EOP application, and the FAFSA.
- FAFSA: **[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)** You will need to answer whether you are a orphan, ward of the court, an emancipated minor, or an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Use the same legal name on all applications.
- Have an official copy of your high school transcripts on hand. You will need them to enter your courses and grades on the online application.
- Have your SAT or ACT results on hand to submit with the application.
- Check for a fee waiver and submit it with your application.
- Keep a copy of all records that you send.
- Make a note of the people you speak with on a campus.

- Keep a copy of your Social Security number in a safe place.

### **ADMITTED STUDENT CHECKLIST**

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- Activate your campus account if your campus requires it. Your campus account will help you track online student updates, missing documents, deadlines, and appointments.
- Open and read carefully all mail and e-mails from your admitted school. Make sure your address and e-mail is always current. Most communication from your school will come via e-mail.
- Keep a copy of all correspondence.
- Return your "Intent to Register Form" and deposit to the campus by the posted deadline. Dependents on financial need, many campus will waive the deposit.
- CSU: Take the ELM (Entry Level Mathematics) and/or EPT (English Placement Test) placement tests unless you were exempt via SAT, ACT, EAP, or AP. Contact your campus testing office.
- Submit final official transcript to colleges that request it.
- Submit the application for student housing. Please note that students should submit housing applications during the admissions application time period. Submit lease agreements and/or deposits. If you are on financial aid, ask about waiving the deposit for low-income students.
- Follow up with financial aid at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) by the March 2 priority deadline. Make sure the SAR (Student Aid Report) forms are complete and submitted to the campus. The SAR will indicate any Expected Family Contribution (EFC). For most former foster youth the EFC is zero.
- Meet immunization requirements. Contact the Student Health Center for campus-specific requirements.
- Register and pay for new student orientation.
- Attend the EOP orientation.
- Register for summer programs such as Summer Bridge through EOP.
- Meet with your EOP advisor to create an educational plan and select classes.
- Register for classes online.
- Submit final official transcripts from your high school.

## **RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS THAT HELP FOSTER YOUTH GET READY FOR AND SUCCEED IN COLLEGE**

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### **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID - [www.AVID.org](http://www.AVID.org))**

- Students are enrolled in an AVID elective class, take advanced classes with curriculum and tutorial support, and focus on qualifying for four-year college and university admission.
- AVID programs are available in many middle and high schools in California.

### **California CareerZone ([www.CACareerZone.com](http://www.CACareerZone.com))**

- The California CareerZone is a FREE Web-based career exploration system that provides easy-to-use self-assessments tools. Students can learn about themselves and how they might match up with 900 O\*Net occupations that detail job definitions, interests, tasks, skills, and more. Approximately 300 of the occupations have videos showing a typical day in the life of someone in that occupation.

### **California Chafee Grant Program ([www.chafee.csac.ca.gov](http://www.chafee.csac.ca.gov))**

- The program gives up to \$5,000 to eligible former foster youth to use for career and technical training or college courses at California Community Colleges, California State University campuses, and University of California campuses, etc.
- Children who exit foster care from relative guardianship or were adopted after age 16 are also eligible.
- Students must enroll in at least half-time as defined by the school.
- Students need to complete a FAFSA and financial aid application at that school.

### **California Community College Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) ([www.cccco.edu](http://www.cccco.edu))**

- FYSI provides support for current and former foster youth attending a California community college.

### **California College Pathways ([www.CACollegePathways.org](http://www.CACollegePathways.org))**

- Goal to increase number of foster youth in higher education and achieve academic outcome by expanding access to campus support programs.

### **California Foster Youth Education Task Force ([www.cfyETF.org](http://www.cfyETF.org))**

- The Task Force brings together subject matter experts representing more than 35 organizations and agencies to engage in cross-systems collaboration.
- Membership is open to anyone interested in promoting improved educational opportunities and successes for California's foster youth.

**California Student Aid Commission ([www.calgrants.org](http://www.calgrants.org))**

- “Cash for College” workshops and financial aid information.

**Foundation for CA Community Colleges YESS Program  
([www.foundationccc.org/WhatWeDo/YESS/tabid/602/Default.aspx](http://www.foundationccc.org/WhatWeDo/YESS/tabid/602/Default.aspx))**

- Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success (YESS) is a comprehensive and integrated program that provides services that focus on life skills training and academic performance with the objective of achieving self-sufficiency, college degree or certificate completion, and employment.

**Gain Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)**

- Program services support the adults who influence a student’s education, specifically their teachers, administrators, counselors, and caregivers.

**Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) ([www.mesa.ucop.edu](http://www.mesa.ucop.edu))**

- MESA provides individualized academic plans, academic excellence workshops in math and science, study skills training, SAT and PSAT preparation, hands-on math and science competition, career and college exploration, interaction with industry representatives, and caregiver involvement.

**PUENTE ([www.puente.net](http://www.puente.net))**

- Puente is a national program to increase the number of students who enroll in colleges and universities, earn college degrees, and return to the community as mentors and leaders for future generations. PUENTE trains school and college faculty to provide rigorous instructions, focused academic counseling, and mentoring by members of the community.

**Upward Bound**

- Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families, families in which neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree, and low-income, first-generation military veterans and foster youth who are preparing to enter postsecondary education. The program offers instruction in math, laboratory science, composition, literature, and languages other than English.

**CSU PROGRAMS FOR FOSTER YOUTH**

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- **CSU Bakersfield**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(661) 654-2276 [www.csub.edu](http://www.csub.edu)
- **CSU Channel Islands**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(805) 437-8515 [www.csuci.edu](http://www.csuci.edu)
- **CSU Chico**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(530) 898-6831 [www.csuchico.edu](http://www.csuchico.edu)
- **CSU Dominguez Hills**  
Student Support Services  
(310) 243-2816 [www.csudh.edu](http://www.csudh.edu)
- **CSU East Bay**  
Renaissance Scholars  
(510) 885-4426 [www.csueastbay.edu/renaissance](http://www.csueastbay.edu/renaissance)
- **CSU Fresno**  
Renaissance Scholars  
(559) 278-5055 [www.csufresno.edu](http://www.csufresno.edu)
- **CSU Fullerton**  
Guardian Scholars  
(657) 278-4900 [www.fullerton.edu](http://www.fullerton.edu)
- **Humboldt State University**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(707) 826-5216 [www.humboldt.edu](http://www.humboldt.edu)
- **CSU Long Beach**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(562) 985-5637 [www.csulb.edu](http://www.csulb.edu)
- **CSU Los Angeles**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(323) 343-3366 [www.calstatela.edu](http://www.calstatela.edu)
- **CSU Monterey Bay**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(831) 582-5148 [www.csumb.edu](http://www.csumb.edu)
- **CSU Northridge**  
EOP Resilient Scholars Program  
(818) 677-4151 [www.csun.edu](http://www.csun.edu)
- **Cal Poly Pomona**  
Renaissance Scholars  
(909) 869-3169 [www.csupomona.edu](http://www.csupomona.edu)
- **CSU Sacramento**  
Guardian Scholars  
(916) 278-3643 [www.csus.edu](http://www.csus.edu)
- **CSU San Bernardino**  
EOP Foster Youth Program  
(909) 537-5042 [www.csusb.edu](http://www.csusb.edu)
- **San Diego State University**  
Guardian Scholars  
(619) 594-6298 [www.sdsu.edu](http://www.sdsu.edu)
- **San Francisco State University**  
Guardian Scholars  
(415) 405-0546 [www.sfsu.edu](http://www.sfsu.edu)
- **San José State University**  
Guardian Scholars  
(408) 924-1089 [www.sjsu.edu](http://www.sjsu.edu)
- **Cal Poly San Luis Obispo**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(805) 756-2301 [www.calpoly.edu](http://www.calpoly.edu)
- **CSU San Marcos**  
ACE Scholars Services  
(760) 750-4861 [www.csusm.edu/ACE](http://www.csusm.edu/ACE)
- **Sonoma State University**  
Educational Opportunity Program  
(707) 664-3077 [www.sonoma.edu](http://www.sonoma.edu)
- **CSU Stanislaus**  
Promise Scholars  
(209) 667-3108 [www.csustan.edu](http://www.csustan.edu)



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