

# 3 STEPS TO GUIDE YOUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL FUTURE

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# THREE STEPS TO GUIDE

YOUR  
CHILDREN'S  
EDUCATIONAL  
FUTURE  
2ND EDITION



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# ENDORSEMENTS

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Dr. Etienne was very inspirational in my decision to return to school for my Education Certification. After receiving a B.A. degree in communications, I worked as an elementary school tutor. It was Dr. Etienne who saw my potential as an excellent educator and motivated me to return to school. I did, and 15 years later I am still teaching and loving it.

~Lori Snell

My acquaintance with Dr. Étienne began after five years of struggling with submitting a clear, scholarly proposal for my dissertation. With Dr. Étienne's guidance, I was able to not only get unstuck, but move through the process with relative ease. When I came to her, I was on the verge of giving up. Yet with her coaching, I was able to go from being completely stuck to having a completed first two chapters in less than a month. Then, a tragedy occurred when my 25-yearold son was killed. Not only did Dr. Étienne help me through that, she softly and gently coached me through the completion of my next dissertation chapter. Before long, I had completed my oral defense. As of today, I anticipate graduating in a couple of months and, in so doing, will become the first in my family to achieve anything of this academic magnitude. Thank you Dr. Étienne!

~Trudy Willis-Jones

2014, my family and I moved from Los Gatos, California to Naples, Florida. From the start everything seemed to go wrong. I had to live in a temporary home for 4 months and I had to go to 2 high schools within the same year. In the first high school I had a terrible experience I thought would not get better if it were not for an accidental placement in the wrong class where I would first meet Dr. Juniace Etienne. I believe the Lord had me go through this in order to meet Dr. Etienne for she has changed my life in more ways than I can count. Dr. Etienne has shaped my educational life



by providing me with the knowledge in regards to high school and college to take advantage of the opportunities to further my educational future, while also being a great influence. She has shaped my view of education in the U.S and has been the model of human excellence for me in how she cares for students' education to the way she cares to inspire and lead the young minds of today's youth in both the U.S and in Haiti. I am thankful for having someone like Dr. Etienne in my life and will always be grateful.

~ Alvaro Celis



## STEP 2

# COLLEGE OPTIONS

The purpose of your children's academic journey is extremely important. It is the essence of their final destination. If they do not have a purpose, their academic journey can be directionless, wasting the time, resources, and energy of all involved.

Combining their purpose with access to good information is very important. If their purpose is not supported by the right information, there is no guarantee that they will stay focused and avoid distractions.

### ALIGNING COLLEGE OPTIONS WITH PURPOSE

One of the goals in supporting your children's college selection should be to help them choose both a college and major that aligns with their purpose. Even though it is not possible to completely safeguard against them becoming part of the vast number of students who change their major three or more times over the course of their college careers, it is possible to help minimize the chances that your children will fall into this group. As previously mentioned, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that 80% of students in the United States changed their major at least once. College Board also reported that five and six-year students in a four-year program are very common. They also reported that approximately 40% of those students who start a four-year degree program still may not have earned their degree after year six. As you can see, it is crucial for your children to start their academic journey with some clarity about their degree choices. Beginning school with the proper information and guidelines can help provide them with this needed clarity.

## THE ONLINE PLANNING TOOL

One way you can help your children get started on the right college path is to encourage them to take the online planning survey available at [www.mycollegeoptions.com](http://www.mycollegeoptions.com). This is a free, comprehensive planning service for college-going students and their families where students can create educational profiles based on their needs and interests. This personal information is then used to develop a list of colleges that match your child's profile and connect them with colleges and institutions that recruit students with such interests. Additionally, the website sends out monthly newsletters, calendar tools, and articles on college planning.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in your children's academic journey is acknowledging the significant value of prioritizing their time. The saying that "time is money" is crucial in terms of their academic journey. The way they prioritize their time can determine whether they will end their academic journey with success or in disarray. If your children are having difficulty defining their career choice, it can impact your financial circumstances as their parents. For that matter, I highly recommend that you encourage your children to create that educational profile to save them time and energy and to potentially save you money.

## UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT COLLEGE OPTIONS

The next step to helping your children explore college options is to understand the different kinds of colleges that exist so that you can help guide your children towards the best fit for them and their individual talents, goals, and aspirations.

**Two-Year Colleges:** Most two-year colleges are either community or technical colleges. These colleges can provide affordable programs that make it possible for most students to either begin their lives purposefully with careers after two years of college or else gain the prerequisites necessary to transfer into a four-year program. When your children complete a short term program they will receive a

certificate or diploma. If they complete a two-year program, they will receive an associate’s degree. If they want to earn a bachelor’s degree, they can start at a community or technical college and then transfer to a four-year college with a college plan to prepare them for the transition. Below are some degree choices that your children can complete within two years that can prepare them to enter the workforce upon completion.

ACCOUNTING	DRAMA / THEATER
HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	NURSING
ART	EARLY CHILDCARE EDUCATION
INTERIOR DESIGN	OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT
ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY	ELECTRONICS
LAW ENFORCEMENT	OFFICE INFORMATION SYSTEMS EMERGENCY
AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY	MEDICAL TECH.
LEGAL ASSISTANCE/PARALEGAL	PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANT
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY
MARKETING	RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY
COMPUTER INFORMATIVE SYSTEM	FASHION MERCHANDISING
MEDICAL LAB TECHNOLOGY	SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY
DENTAL ASSISTING/ HYGIENE	FIRE SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY
MUSIC	TRAVEL AND TOURISM

**Four-Year Colleges:** A four-year bachelor’s degree can open doors and provide a wide range of career choices and opportunities for your children. If your children want to attend a four-year college, they need to stay focused and work hard throughout high school, get good grades, challenge themselves with some honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and be involved in some extracurricular activities like clubs, sports, or the band or choir. Whereas some colleges accept all graduates who apply, most four-year colleges and universities have admissions

requirements. Colleges vary widely from less-selective to highly-selective, so it's important to help your children research schools that not only look to be a good fit for them in terms of their interests and passions, but also for which they are academically competitive. You should encourage your children to challenge themselves throughout high school and stay very focused on their academics, but at the end of the day you also need to help them be realistic in applying for colleges to which they have a solid chance of gaining admittance. No matter how selective the colleges to which your children plan to apply, colleges want students who are well prepared to do college-level work. Many colleges highly recommend, and even prefer, that high school students take as many college prep courses as they can in order to increase their chances of not only being accepted to a four-year college, but more importantly finding success once enrolled there. It's also important to understand that some four year colleges are public and some are private. As a general rule, public colleges tend to be larger and less expensive than private schools. They tend to offer a wider variety of majors, programs, and activities. Private colleges, on the other hand, tend to have smaller classes and offer a more personalized atmosphere for students. Below are some degree choices that your children can complete within four years. They prepare students for specific purposes and career choices.

ACCOUNTING	CHEMICAL
ARCHITECTURE	ENGINEERING
ART EDUCATION	CHEMISTRY
ART HISTORY	CIVIL ENGINEERING
BIOLOGY	COMMUNICATIONS
BOTANY	COMPUTER ENGINEERING
BUSINESS	COMPUTER SCIENCE
ADMINISTRATION	CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## OTHER EDUCATIONAL CHOICES

Besides two and four-year degree programs, there are other educational choices that you can help your children explore. Keep in mind that most career choices do require an education or some training beyond a high school diploma.

**Specialty colleges:** Specialty colleges are a good option if your children have already discovered their passion and they have an educational plan, meaning they know exactly what they want to do. Specialty colleges have more limited and focused program offerings than traditional colleges and universities. For example, art institutes, nursing schools, and even some business schools are all specialty colleges. Keep in mind that the cost of these colleges and the lengths of their programs may vary, depending on the school, the program type, and the location.

**Career and trade schools:** These are another option that could be a good fit if your children are very focused on careers that needs some sort of technical certification as a prerequisite for the work. These schools offer short-term training programs in a wide variety of career fields (e.g. phlebotomy, photography, auto body technology dental assisting, welding). While some programs last only a few weeks, others can take two or more years to complete. Career and trade schools tend to be expensive and credits are often non-transferrable, so if your children decide to enroll in one of these programs it's very important that they see the program through to completion and receive their certificate.

**Apprenticeships:** Apprenticeships are a route to pursue if your children have not yet discovered their passions and are not sure of a career choice. Apprenticeships offer hands-on approaches to learning and give young people an opportunity to explore

**Military:** The U.S. Military offers free job training in over 2,000 job specialties, including preparing young people for careers as

mechanics, computer technicians, paramedics, etc. Enlistees can also take college classes while they are in the military.

## HELPING YOUR CHILDREN MAKE THE DECISION

With all these college options, you may wonder where you even begin with helping them choose the right college path. Luckily, it's not as complicated as it may at first seem. When you and your children are choosing a college, the decision should be made based on the college that can enhance their purpose, passion, and their vision's life assignment.

In order to find such college, they need to first figure out what they are looking for in a college, then learn as much as they can about their college choices, and finally make college visits.

### **Step 1 – Figure out what they are looking for**

Choosing a college is much easier if your children know what they are looking for. When choosing a college, they should consider such elements as location, admissions requirements, size, available majors, special programs, and cost.

**Location:** In determining location, help your children decide where they want to attend college. Do they want to attend a college close to home, or would they rather go away to school? Do they want to be where it's warm, where there's snow, or by the ocean? Would they rather go to college in a small town or a big city? Most students attend public colleges in their home states so that they can take advantage of in-state tuition programs. For example, it costs a student living in New York more to go to Florida State University than it costs a student living in Florida to attend the same school. If your children choose to attend college in their home state, it might also make it easier for them to travel home for holidays and vacations. If finances are a top consideration, you might want to encourage your children to explore college options that are close enough for them to commute to from home. As previously mentioned, colleges vary greatly

when it comes to their admissions requirements. When your children are looking for colleges, encourage them to create an educational plan and seek out colleges that accept students with academic records similar to theirs. Every college has its own admission requirements and it is your children's responsibility to match their needs to the college that can enhance their talents and that can provide them with the credentials to pursue their vision.

**Size:** College size is another consideration. While some small colleges have under 1,000 students, large universities can have over 25,000 students. When thinking and deciding about what size college your children would like to attend, remember that larger colleges have more majors, more courses, and more activities to choose from, whereas smaller colleges are personal, the classes usually have fewer students, and they are easier to navigate.

**Majors and Specialty Programs:** The availability of majors is another consideration that your children need to be mindful of when exploring college options. All colleges have a variety of majors and programs. While most colleges have popular majors such as business, no college is able to offer every major. If there's a specific subject that your children want to study, they need to look for colleges that have that major. For example, if they want to study law, they need to look for colleges with a major in law. Likewise, if they want a college with a specific program, activity, or sport, they need to find the colleges that offer what they are seeking to pursue. For example, perhaps they want a college that has a girls' volleyball team or an orchestra. Having a program or activity that they want to become involved in might help them to narrow their list of college choices.

**Cost:** Talk to your children about how they are going to pay for college. When they are choosing a college, cost is something that they need to take into consideration. There are many ways of making college affordable. They should never think that they cannot go to college because they don't have enough money or because you cannot afford their tuition. They need to apply for as many scholarships that are pertinent to their abilities, talents, and career choices and also be

mindful of how financial aid and student loans work. Financial aid is money that is given, earned, or lent to help students pay their education. The four kinds of financial aid are grants, scholarship, loans, and work-study. Students who need help paying for college are often able to get a grant (free money) from the government. Students can also get loans that they don't need to repay until they leave college. Additionally, there are a number of ways your children can cut college costs. Here is a partial list:

- Encourage your children to go to a public four-year college in your home state.
- Have your children earn an associate's degree at a community college.
- Have your children start at a community college or technical college and then transfer to a four-year college after a year or two.
- Encourage your children to live at home instead of in a dorm or apartment.

Figuring out how to pay for college can be confusing, but there are resources to help you. For example, your children's high school guidance counselor can give you information about the financial aid process and all colleges have financial aid counselors available to help students and parents. **Step 2 – Learn as much as they can about their college choices**

Your child should ask people they know who have attended college about their college experiences. For example, they could talk to their teachers, family members, and family friends about their college experiences.

These are a few questions I suggest that they can ask to get the conversation started: Where did you go to college? What was your major? How has a college education helped you? Do you have any suggestions or advice for me? Most importantly, you should have a conversation with your children and their guidance counselor about the

best possible college options so that you can effectively guide them on the right path. Try to give them the best possible advice as you can, and be honest with them and yourself throughout the process. As much as possible, try to guide them down *their* own path and not *yours*.

I know from personal experience the importance of helping your children figure out their own path and not over asserting your own wishes for their future. All throughout their high school years, I had encouraged my twin daughters to pursue pharmaceutical careers. They did so, but after the second year of college, they both realized that pharmacy was a far cry from their true passion and purpose. I was devastated at the time, but I now see years later that they have crafted their own paths and will be successful in using their gifts to pursue their true purposes in the fashion industry. Looking back, I could have saved myself a lot of frustration and financial difficulties if I had helped them clearly define their plans at an earlier age. And likewise, it would have saved them a lot of heartache and delayed opportunities if they had been encouraged to discover and follow their purpose before embarking down a misguided educational path.

Another resource is reference books in guidance offices, bookstores, and libraries, as well as information that can be obtained online. The “My College Options” website mentioned earlier is one such resource that will help your children choose a college, prepare for college admissions tests, apply for financial aid, and much more.

Once your children know what they’re looking for in a college, they can do an online search for the colleges that meet their specific needs and can enhance their gifts and talents. For example, maybe they want to attend a small-size college in Florida with a major in marine biology and a men’s basketball team. They can do a search at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org), and get a list of colleges that have exactly what they are looking for.

Encourage your children to talk to the college representatives who visit their high school. You should encourage them to attend college fairs, and make college visits when possible.

### **Step 3 – Make college visits**

The best way to find out if a college is right for your children is to visit the colleges in which they may be interested. Although there's a lot of information available online to help your children choose a school, an in-person visit is always preferable if possible. You may want to visit a college campus with them in order to gather all the necessary and important information about the admissions process, college life, etc. Additionally, taking a college tour during the visits will give your children a better understanding of how to be a college student. During the college visit, I encourage you and your children to visit the library, the student union, the recreation center, and the learning labs to see firsthand what college life on the campus is like.

It is never too early or too late to visit a college. If your children are high school juniors or seniors, I encourage you to schedule a visit and have them take the time to check things out more thoroughly. If possible, colleges should be visited during the academic year – and not the summer – so that your children can see what the school is like when it is in full swing.

It is very easy to plan for a college visit. You can begin by checking the college's website or calling the admissions office to find out if they have any upcoming special visitation days or open houses scheduled. If they do, try to attend one with your children. I suggest you also work to schedule a college tour while on campus and alert the admissions representative giving the tour of any specific programs or majors your children would like to learn more about. There are many programs that are set up for high school students and their parents to learn about the college admissions process and college life.

I remember one summer when my daughters and I rode the Greyhound bus all the way to North Carolina to visit Columbia College. Prior to the visit, they did their research and explored the different program offerings of the college, including the dance program that they were both interested in at the time. On the bus ride up, I encouraged them to write down any and all questions they wanted to

ask, which they did. By the time we got there, we knew exactly what we wanted to see and what questions we wanted to ask.

The visit was a great experience for all of us, as we had the opportunity to ask questions in person and visit some classrooms and dorms. As a parent, I believe that knowing where your children are sleeping is important. We all left that visit with a much better understanding of the college's offerings and whether or not it might be a good fit for my daughters.

Here are a few helpful suggestions of things to keep in mind during your visit:

- Note the cleanliness, atmosphere, and size of the campus.
- Check out the library, the computer labs, and the recreation sports center.
- Assess the campus climate, including how the students act and how comfortable and happy they appear to be.
- Meet with an admissions counselor and ask about the admissions requirements, including average high-school GPA = of entering students, etc.
- Attend a group information session.
- Sit in on a class.
- Speak to someone in the departments of the majors in which your child is interested in pursuing.
- Visit a dorm.
- Eat in one of the student dining halls.
- Meet with a counselor in the financial aid office and ask some questions about available student loans, grants, and work study programs. Also ask about the average student debt of students when they graduate.
- Visit the student union and talk to students.

- Ask other students what they like about the school, what they don't like, how much they have to study, and what they do on weekends.
- Check out the surrounding city or town.

Choosing a college without making a college visit is like buying a car without taking it for a test drive. Just because a college looks great in a brochure doesn't mean that the college will be right for your child. The effort it takes to visit colleges is well worth the investment of time and resources.

## COLLEGE OPTIONS JOURNALING SPACE:









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## OTHER WORKS BY THE AUTHOR

*A Grounded Theory Approach to Use of Differentiated Instruction to Improve Students' Outcomes in Mathematics*

*7 Principles to Achieve Educational Success; Triumphant Over Hell On Earth*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Juniace Senecharles Etienne is an educator with Collier Public Schools in Naples, Florida who works with both gifted children and those with learning disabilities. She also teaches French. Dr. Etienne graduated Summa Cum Laude from Barry University in Exceptional Student Education (ESE), received her Master's degree in Reading from Nova Southern University, and earned her Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from Walden University. She is presently pursuing a second Master's degree in French from Southern University.

Born in Miragoan, Haiti, Dr. Etienne came to Collier County as a teenager, where she currently resides with her husband, Romel. She

has two daughters, Joyce and Jessica Gayo, and two step-daughters, Samantha and Sheena Etienne.

For more information about Dr. Etienne's Educational Empowerment Coaching Services, visit her website at:  
**[www.juniaceshapingyoungminds.com](http://www.juniaceshapingyoungminds.com)**.

