



College Eligible vs. College Ready...

What's the difference?

So! What do these terms mean to you? Do you think there's a difference? I'd venture to say that there's a HUGE difference, yet for the most part, we think that the former is the latter.

In fact, I think it's a myth perpetuated by most of the people in our education system-whether they do it consciously or unconsciously, I think that principals, guidance counselors, teachers, sports coaches-you name it-believe that if teens complete all of these tasks...

1. start to think about college in eighth grade
2. take the most challenging course of study possible in which you can achieve good grades
3. have a great GPA (grade point average) and great rank in class
4. are deeply involved in a few extracurricular activities
5. pursue challenging experiences in the summers-study, travel, work
6. begin the college search in earnest at the beginning of junior year
7. prepare for standardized tests and take them
8. tour and visit colleges during your junior year
9. start completing applications for college in the summer after junior year
10. write your applications essays during the summer between junior and senior years
11. get your letters of recommendation to teachers early
12. maintain your good academic standing throughout your entire senior year then, they are really prepared for college.



What do you think? Would your teen be ready to leave home and succeed in college with just these skills?

My answer: Certainly not! If teens do all of these tasks well, they have practiced their academic skills (note-taking, communication, etc.), expanded their content knowledge, and managed a huge, long term project; yet, they have not addressed what I consider to be the core of college readiness skills... Being college eligible is only a part of the picture! I think that being **college ready or career ready** is equally important, though it is so much easier to focus on test scores or GPA.

I'd like to share my thoughts about your teen being college ready and how you can nurture that state of being. College readiness includes all the academic and cognitive achievements mentioned. It's also the emotional component of the process, the softer side of it, that we think doesn't get addressed in schools-but it **does** in some places, and there are always opportunities in everyday life to encourage our teens to step into adulthood.

The central question is: What does it take to do well in college? It takes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be an independent young adult who is truly capable in these areas:

self care/managing one's self

- eating, cleaning, classes/workload/extracurriculars-work/play balance, relationships, partying, drugs, alcohol, sex, refusal skills
- understanding of money, checking, credit, loans
- how to recognize that help is needed and how access it-for self or others



goal orientation/vision of successful college student

- knowledge of options and implications-whether it's going to college, or being in college and choosing a course of study, study abroad or internships
- ability to apply oneself-to the academic side of life at college
- monitor one's own performance, recognize what is going well and self-correct what needs work

interpersonal skills

- self knowledge-goals, needs, wants, boundaries

communication-in person, email, texting, telephone

- teamwork
- conflict resolution
- refusal skills-relationships, partying, drugs, alcohol, sex
- self advocacy-as learner

How are you doing with helping your teen develop skills in these areas that directly impact life and success at college? If you or your teen want support, please contact me and I will be happy to share more resources with you.