

Parent School Counselor Guide

9th Grade

Your child's school counselor is a vital resource. The counselor is trained to take a complete look at your child, from academic achievement to college and career planning to emotional and social development. You should contact and stay in touch with your child's school counselor, in addition to your child's teacher. While every school is different, many have counselors on-site during parent-teacher conferences, and encourage parents to drop by for a meeting. Additionally, many schools offer counselor-led parents' nights, or back-to-school nights, where they offer a variety of information and advice for parents of students in each high school grade. The counselor's role varies in each school, but many counselors follow a class for all four years of high school, which means the counselor assigned to your child's 9th grade class will stay with that class until 12th grade. This gives the counselor a unique view of your child as she progresses through high school. The counselor can offer insight into what types of classes your child will be challenged by and what kinds of careers may interest her, and can also suggest special-education or AP classes that would be a good fit for your child.

- **No one knows your child better than you do.**

Despite the fact your child is taking on more responsibility and independence in high school, your involvement is still critical. Counselor Ruth Lohmeyer at Northeast High School in Lincoln, Nebraska, says a survey of her 9th graders shows parents are the biggest influencers on students' career and college choices. The counselor will likely be doing a lot of work with your child in planning for her future. Your insights for the counselor are just as important as what the counselor can offer you. The partnership you form with the counselor will benefit your child and help all of you find the right fit for your child after graduation, whether it is a four-year university, community college, military enrollment, or career.

- **Your child's school counselor has a more comprehensive view of your child than her teacher may have.**

Especially in high school when teachers are often focused on their class or subject, counselors monitor your child's academic progress and make sure she is taking the right types of classes to graduate on time and be prepared for career and college.

- **If your child is struggling, the first person you may hear from is the counselor.**

If your child is having difficulty in multiple classes, the counselor may be brought in to arrange conferences with different teachers. He can develop interventions like monitoring homework completion, having you keep track of grades online, and bringing in tutors if necessary. He may ask you questions about home life – if there's a place for your child to do homework or if there's anything emotionally concerning at home that may be interfering with her ability to focus on schoolwork. Counselors are concerned with your child's overall wellbeing, and can offer referrals to mental health professionals if your child is having emotional or behavioral difficulties.

- **The transition to high school can be difficult for students.**

Counselors can be a good resource for your child if she needs someone to talk to or additional guidance on classes or activities. Some school counselors will also pair incoming students with mentors in 11th or 12th grade to help ease the transition and give your child another student she can go to for advice.

- **In some cases, counselors may start connecting with you and your child during the registration process for high school.**

The counselor wants to make sure that your child is placed in the right classes. If your child is high-achieving he may suggest trying AP or honors level classes. If your child is behind, he may suggest tutoring or other resources to get your child on track.

- **The counselor will know graduation requirements for your child.**

You should be aware of classes your child should take. Starting this conversation with your counselor early on will lay the foundation for planning for your child's academic future over the next four years.

- **The counselor is likely to begin asking about your child's interests and activities.**

It may be a conversation your child has with the counselor alone, or you may discuss in a meeting. In either case, you should also ask your child about her interests. Ninth grade is a good time to be thinking about what your child wants to do after high school. The counselor can suggest elective classes based on your child's interests.

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