

6 Signs you're a High Maintenance Parent

The children of Baby Boomers, the Echo Generation, are entering college in increasing numbers. Getting into the best schools is increasingly competitive. Having good grades, a great SAT score and participating in extracurricular activities is no assurance that your student will get into the school of their choice. Because of that phenomenon, parents are taking a much more active role in their children's college admission process. But for some parents, participation in their child's college search has led to a troubling development that college admissions officers are seeing more frequently.

It is the High Maintenance Parent (HMP). And college admissions officers are reporting it more and more. If you answer yes to any of these six questions, you may be a High Maintenance Parent.

1. Does your child barely know what's on their college application but you can quote every word in their personal essay (because you wrote it)?

Students who don't take an active role in their college planning and admission process tend not to be successful in college. Students need to take ownership of the process because it's their future on the line. It's time to cut the umbilical cord and let little Johnny fail or succeed. In the end it's a disservice to your child if you do the work for him.

2. Is the admissions officer at the school of your choice on your speed dial and recognizes your voice or phone number when you call?

You want your child to be memorable, not you. Don't be a pest. It can count against your child.

3. Are you asking (or telling) your child to apply to schools that they are not interested in just so YOU can brag that they got into Harvard, Stanford, etc?

It's hard enough for your child to do everything necessary to apply to college without the added stress of completing applications for schools they don't want to go to. This is not the time to relive your past or try to out-Jones the Joneses'.

4. Is your "back-up" strategy for financial aid to tell the financial aid officer that your child is so smart, talented, etc that they should pay you to LET your child attend XYZ University?

By knowing your expected family contribution before applying, you save yourself from the potential surprise of getting an award letter with less aid than you were expecting. And make sure you research the college's financial aid policy to know if you have a circumstance that would cause the school to revisit your award letter.

- 5. Have you talked to your attorney about suing your child's high school because she did not get the special attention she needed in high school, and thus, will not be able to attend the university of her choice?**

Be an active parent throughout your child's education, don't start in her senior year as she applies to colleges. The reality is, at that point it's too late. If she needs special attention in high school make sure she gets it.

- 6. Have you asked the guidance counselor at the high school to purge evidence of cheating, truancy or other discipline problems from your child's record in order to increase their chance of getting into the college of their choice? If so, you are DEFINITELY a High Maintenance Parent!**

You put your child and all other students applying from that high school at risk by asking guidance counselors to lie by omission. If admissions personnel find that student records are being sanitized, they can refuse to admit anyone from a particular high school.

College admissions is a competitive process with each party looking to get the best result. Admissions officers are responsible for admitting a diverse student body. They want students that will reflect the values of the institution and who will be a positive contribution to the student body. Now, while they are still in your house, is the time to impart those values and position your child to be an asset to the student body.

Balanced against the school's needs is the student's desire to be admitted. The best way for you to help your child is by being an advocate and mentor, but realize, ultimately the decision and experience of college will be up to your child.

If you are confused or overwhelmed by the college planning process and want more information on how to get started, call (201) 453-9875 or visit www.CollegeFundingResource.com.