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10 Ways to Help Your Teen With the College Decision

Parents should discuss cost and other key topics but give their child freedom to make the final choice.

By Kelly Mae Ross, Reporter | April 9, 2018, at 9:00 a.m.

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Discuss Affordability – in Detail

(Getty Images)

After reviewing financial aid award letters, families should discuss the money-related implications of attending each school. Parents should be honest and detailed when talking with their teenager about college costs, says Jeff Schiffman, director of admission at Tulane University in New Orleans. "Treat your kid like an adult," he says. Schiffman recommends that families make a spreadsheet to compare the cost of each college. The document can also include information about how much debt a student or family would have to take on for each option.

Discussing the implications of student loan debt is also important, Erin Goodnow, co-founder and CEO of Going Ivy, an Arizona-based college admissions consulting firm, said via email. "Debt should mean something to your student, whether it is theirs or yours," she said. "It might also mean the difference in certain college experiences like studying abroad, work study, bringing a car to campus, or flying home less frequently," she said.

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Kelly Mae Ross is an education reporter at U.S. News, covering international higher education. You can follow her on Twitter or email her at kross@usnews.com.

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