**Family Workshop: Financial Aid 101**

**DESCRIPTION**

This presentation covers how to pay for college and the basics of financial aid and college savings. Consider inviting a representative from a local college’s financial aid office and/or a local bank or credit union to present the information as well. If your school is partnering with an organization that offers students Individual Development Accounts, then provide information and an opportunity to sign up on the spot.

**SUGGESTED MONTH**

November

**SUGGESTED AUDIENCE**

Parents & 7th-12th grade students

**MATERIALS**

Financial Aid 101 Power Point

Financial Aid Race Cards

Small Prizes (optional)

**HANDOUTS**

* [ECMC Paying for College](https://www.ecmc.org/students/resource-guides.html) *(available in English and Spanish)*
* [ECMC Opportunities Booklet](https://www.ecmc.org/students/opportunities-guide-workbook.html) *(available in English and Spanish)*
* [Do You Need Money for College? The Guide to Federal Student Aid](https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/resources.jsp)
* [Federal Student Aid at a Glance](https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/resources.jsp)
* [Federal Student Aid College Preparation Checklist](https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/resources.jsp)
* Newsletter: Understanding College costs

**MORE INFORMATION**

* [Financial Aid Toolkit](http://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/): Additional power point presentations, resources and hints from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of [Federal Student Aid](https://studentaid.ed.gov/).
* [Counselors & Mentors Handbook](https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/resources/counselors-handbook-2018-19.pdf): Includes handouts and information on advising about financial aid
* [Federal Student Aid YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/FederalStudentAid): Short and simple videos on the financial aid process
* [NASFAA Resources for Counselors](https://www.nasfaa.org/tools_resources): A directory of volunteer speakers, Financial Aid Night event toolkit and more from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

**AGENDA**

First 5 minutes General Welcome

Next 25 minutes Present **Financial Aid 101** power point. Allow time for questions.

Next 15 minutes Activity: The Financial Aid Race *(adapted from UC Berkeley’s Center for Educational Partnerships* [*Financial Aid Choices Game*](http://collegetools.berkeley.edu/documents/cat_113-127/Financial_Aid_Choices_Game.pdf)*)*

Each student-parent combination becomes a team (or with a large group, combine several students and parents into one team). Have every team line up on one side of the room. Pass out one card to each team; each team takes turns reading their card and following the directions about whether to move forward, backwards or stay in the same place. Explain the significance of the card and answer questions as necessary. The winning team is the first one to get to the other side of the room (signifying they have received maximum financial aid). Give small prizes to the winners (optional).

Final 5 minutes Send the participants off with the following Action Steps:  
1) Encourage students/parents to sign up for a college savings account or Individual Development Account (preferably this evening)  
2) Encourage parents and students to have a conversation about the cost of college and what families will be able to contribute.  
3) Distribute handout(s)  
4) Reminder about next event

**FINANCIAL AID RACE CARDS**

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| Search for scholarships that I can apply to online.  **TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD** | Apply for a scholarship that is specifically for students of my heritage.  **TAKE 5 STEPS FORWARD** | Don’t fill out the FAFSA to get federal and/or state  financial aid.  **TAKE 5 STEPS BACK** |
| Tell your friend who is an artist about a scholarship that involves drawing a picture.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** | Ask a teacher for advice when you are worried because you think you can only apply to scholarships if you have good grades.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** | Play computer games instead of looking for scholarships even when your parents told you to.  **TAKE 4 STEPS BACK** |
| Tell a friend who is undocumented about scholarships available for her at the Utah Promise website.  **MOVE FORWARD 4 STEPS** | Forget what time your interview for a scholarship was scheduled for.  **STAY WHERE YOU ARE** | Apply for scholarships that require students to be bilingual because you speak another language with your family.  **MOVE FORWARD 2 STEPS** |
| Forget to send an essay with one of the scholarships you apply for.  **TAKE 2 STEPS BACK** | Ask your teacher for help in proofreading your scholarship essays.  **TAKE 3 STEPS FORWARD** | Put financial aid deadlines in your planner ahead of time so you know when things are due.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** |
| Slack off senior year because your last year of high school is supposed to be fun, and grades don’t matter for financial aid anyways.  **TAKE 5 STEPS BACK** | Ask your teacher for a letter of recommendation for a scholarship.  **TAKE 3 STEPS FORWARD** | Go to the movies with your friends instead of attending a financial aid workshop.  **TAKE 1 STEP BACK** |

**FINANCIAL AID RACE CARDS**

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| Volunteer to help a youth soccer team – it’s fun and it shows leadership skills.  **TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD** | Join the public library summer reading program in order to improve your grades.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** | Lie on a scholarship application about the amount of school activities you have.  **TAKE 5 STEPS BACK** |
| Buy a new pair of shoes instead of putting money in your college savings account.  **TAKE 2 STEPS BACK** | Only apply to one scholarship because if you win it your entire education will be paid for.  **STAY WHERE YOU ARE** | Start filling out the FAFSA but give up when there is a question that you don’t know the answer to.  **TAKE 4 STEPS BACK** |
| Get a job babysitting and put half of what you earn into a college savings account.  **MOVE FORWARD 4 STEPS** | Miss the deadline for a scholarship you really wanted to apply for.  **STAY WHERE YOU ARE** | Decide to use a credit card or bank loan to pay for college instead of filling out the FAFSA.  **MOVE BACK 6 STEPS** |
| Watch videos about the financial aid process on YouTube.  **TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD** | Set up a college savings account that you and your parents can contribute to.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** | Assume you can’t afford to pay for college, so don’t apply to college or for financial aid.  **TAKE 4 STEPS BACK** |
| Chart every year so you remember all of the activities you participated in.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** | Fill out the FAFSA the day it opens on January 1st.  **TAKE 3 STEPS FORWARD** | Get help with your FAFSA by going to a workshop at your school.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** |

**FINANCIAL AID RACE CARDS**

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| Fill out the FAFSA4Caster with your parents before your senior year to see how much money you might get for financial aid.  **TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD** | Play sports throughout high school and be involved in many clubs and activities.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** | Be lazy and decide to go fishing instead of finishing a scholarship application.  **TAKE 5 STEPS BACK** |
| Borrow more money than you need for college so you can go on vacation, too.  **TAKE 2 STEPS BACK** | Wait to apply for the FAFSA until spring.  **STAY WHERE YOU ARE** | Don’t compare financial aid packages closely and end up going to a school that gives you mostly loans instead of grants.  **TAKE 4 STEPS BACK** |
| Apply for work-study jobs before you get to campus and get the one you wanted at the library.  **MOVE FORWARD 4 STEPS** | Learn more about the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans since it’s a little confusing.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** | Decide to use a credit card or bank loan to pay for college instead of filling out the FAFSA.  **MOVE BACK 6 STEPS** |
| Watch videos about the financial aid process on YouTube.  **TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD** | Set up a college savings account that you and your parents can contribute to.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** | Fill out the FAFSA your first year but forget to do it the next year when you’re in college.  **TAKE 4 STEPS BACK** |
| Lose your scholarship in college because you’re failing a class.  **TAKE 2 STEPS BACK** | Only apply to community college because public and private universities are so much more expensive.  **TAKE 3 STEPS BACK** | Participate in a summer program at school that helps you with college and scholarship applications and essays.  **TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD** |