



Early College Readiness Checklists

For some highly and profoundly gifted adolescent and young teen students, early college is a viable and serious educational option to explore. However, just because a child is capable of learning high-level material does not always mean early college is the right choice.

Decades of research tell us that no one academic indicator can predict early college success. At the same time, anecdotal data and case studies give us insights into the social-emotional and organizational issues that should be taken into consideration before enrolling an adolescent or young teen into a college class.

The *Early College Readiness Checklists* are informal inventory tools that professionals and parents can use to assess if a student may benefit from radical acceleration into college. The checklists are based on research from University of Washington, Mary Baldwin College, Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth, as well as case studies conducted by Hand In Hand Education with a dozen early college students.

Answering YES to all the questions on the checklist does not automatically indicate a young person should be enrolled in early college. The checklist is just one tool to be used in the decision making process. Consideration should also be given to:

1. Student's desire to attend early college
2. Family support for early college
3. Current SAT or ACT scores
4. Financial cost affordable by family

About the Author: Alessa Giampaolo Keener, M.Ed. speaks nationally on the topic of early college readiness and the social-emotional needs of profoundly gifted children. She consults with private families and educational institutions who wish to explore early college as an educational option.

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Early College Readiness Checklist: Part-time Enrollment for Tweens and Teens

Your child may have the ability to handle high-level material, but is he or she ready to attend college? Mark an “X” next to each statement you answer with a “yes”.

- My child can sit quietly, on their own, during a 50 to 75-minute lecture.
- My child can selectively contribute during class, rather than volunteer an answer every time a question is asked.
- My child can handle being wrong in front of a group without “melting down”.
- My child can respectfully participate in a group conversation, allowing and encouraging others to contribute to the discussion.
- My child can maturely handle criticism and/or conflicting opinions during a discussion.
- My child has the motor and attention skills necessary for independent note-taking during class.
- My child has necessary writing skills to independently produce essays and college-level lab reports.
- My child has necessary organizational skills to track assignments and meet deadlines without my assistance and/or oversight?
- My child has learned to self-advocate, accommodate and/or self-monitor learning issues associated with a learning disability they may have.
- My child can deal with both the positive and negative attention that comes from being the “smart, cute kid” on campus.
- My child can moderate their sensitivity for social justice, in order to fully participate in dissections or certain discussions, such as the death penalty.
- I, as a parent, am okay with my child watching an R-rated movie and/or participating in a classroom discussion on a topic, such as abortion or sexual orientation, which may conflict with my beliefs.

Understanding Your Results

If you answered “yes” to 8 or more statements, early college may be a viable educational opportunity worth exploring for your pre-adolescent or young teenager. If, however, you found yourself negotiating how you could answer “yes” to certain questions, you may want to speak with an educational consultant for an outside opinion on early college readiness.



Early College Readiness Checklist: Full-time Enrollment for Young Teens

Your child may have the ability to handle high-level material, but is he or she ready to attend college? Mark an “X” next to each statement you answer with a “yes”.

- My teen can effectively handle and resist peer pressure.
- My teen can responsibly respond to underage drinking and drug use.
- My teen can respectfully decline a date from an older student who may not be aware of their age.
- My teen can navigate medical care and doctors’ visits on their own.
- The college my teen will be attending provides medical care for students under the age of 17.
- My son calmly handles unwanted attention when his voice may crack.
- My daughter handles menstruation, such as PMS-related mood swings and cramps, on her own.
- My teen is prepared to no longer be the highest achiever or most knowledgeable student in class.
- My teen is comfortable with other people knowing their age and level of acceleration and is prepared to handle the attention that will come if and when people discover how old they are.
- My teen has the organizational skills necessary to track assignments and meet deadlines without my assistance or oversight.
- My teen has developed a sense of self that encompasses more than just their intelligence.
- My teen has non-academic interests that will help them relate to other students and make friends.
- My teen can initiate conversations and social interactions with non-intellectual peers.
- My teen looks people in the eye when they speak.
- My teen wakes up on time and is able to be fed and ready for class with no help.
- My teen can be trusted to eat regular and nutritionally sound meals.
- My teen has good personal hygiene habits that do not require constant reminders.
- My teen can do their own laundry.
- My teen manages their daily medications without reminders.
- Reliable public or campus-provided transportation is available so my teen can safely travel between campus housing to all classes, as well as internships and part-time jobs.

Understanding Your Results

If you answered “yes” to 14 or more statements, full-time early college with on-campus housing may be a viable educational opportunity worth exploring for your teenager. If, however, you found yourself negotiating how you could answer “yes” to certain questions, you may want to speak with an educational consultant for an outside opinion on full-time early college readiness.