

senior year

Timeline

deadlines,decisions,andmemories organized in one place



Senior Year

Timeline

Senior year is a whirlwind of deadlines, decisions, and milestones. emotionally and practically. This month-by-month checklist is designed to help parents stay on track, stay connected, and support their student in the journey toward graduation and beyond. From college applications to falsa forms to late-night ice cream runs and memory-making moments, this guide brings it all together in one place.

Parent + Student Connections: Conversation Starters

Here are four great questions to keep in your back pocket for moments when schedules get busy or tensions begin to rise. Take turns answering the question to find some common ground. This exercise pairs well with ice cream.

1. What are you most excited about right now?
2. What is one thing you are nervous about right now?
3. Tell me one things I can do to support you right now?
4. Let's pause for celebration - what's one thing you think I am crushing right now?

Find some Fun

These are the good days. Here are five ways to connect depending on different moods, family styles, and schedule constraints that can create some space for family connection when it allows.

1. Memory Lane (Nostalgic)

Visit childhood spots — first home, old favorite park, early school, etc. Share stories, take photos, play forgotten favorite songs, and maybe even recreate an old family photo.

2. Survival Pack for the Future (Thoughtful + Creative)

Each family member contributes a small item, note, or memory to a “senior survival kit.”

3. Plan a Spontaneous Day Trip (Adventurous + Memorable)

Let your senior choose a direction or landmark within a 2-hour drive. Explore a town, hike a trail, or visit a quirky roadside attraction.

4. “This I’ll Miss About You” Circle (Heartfelt + Lasting)

On a quiet evening, go around and share one thing you’ll miss, admire, or remember about each person before the graduate leaves home.

5. Plan your senior photo session together

Senior Year Checklist

August

- Finalize senior class schedule with counselor or registrar
- Start or refine college list
- Create Common App or school if interest application accounts
- Take senior photos
- Schedule college visits (in-person or virtual)

September

- Request teacher recommendation letters
- Attend college rep visits at school
- Finalize Activity & Award Chart
- Write college essays (check the Common App prompts for ideas)
- Discuss family college budget and create FSA ID's (both parents and student) while eating your favorite takeout.
- Start applying to colleges of interest
- Take senior photos if you haven't yet

October

- Continue college applications and aim for early deadlines (usually November 1-15)
- Complete FAFSA (historically opens Oct 1)
- Visit fall college preview days
- Plan a cartoon, pajama, and pancake breakfast on a Saturday morning with your friends
- Take senior photos if you haven't yet

November

- Start looking around for scholarships
- Check in on mental health and burnout.
- Look through old family photos and mementos with family members when you're together on fall break.
- Watch for emails from your school about ordering your cap & gown, submitting yearbook photos, and purchasing parent ad space in those yearbooks.

December

- Request official transcripts with current senior year grades if needed.
- Check your inbox for early admissions decisions (if you applied) and celebrate the wins!
- Think of a few underclassmen who you respect and write them a note of appreciation to call out their leadership as they approach their own senior year.
- Reflect on highlights and growth from first semester.
- Plan one holiday memory as a family.
- Try your best to finish remaining applications and fill out scholarships over winter break.

January

- Review FAFSA submission and corrections
- Start tracking college acceptances and aid
- Apply for local or regional scholarships
- Prepare for second semester expectations. Clean out your locker, reset your binders, restock your supplies.
- Have a check-in conversation with your parents about what's ahead.

February

- Continue scholarship search.
- Complete any last minute college application before the regular deadline (around March 1)
- Enjoy time with friends during winter formal or game nights.
- Start a list of friends and family you'd like to invite to your graduation or grad party.
- Make sure you order school designed announcements or get online and design your own. Order now to avoid printing mishaps or shipping delays later.

March

- Receive most college admission decisions
- Compare financial aid packages using Net Price Worksheet and College Comparison Matrix
- Plan spring break campus visits if undecided. Plan spring break fun too.
- Celebrate milestones (letters, awards, acceptances!)

April

- Make a final college decision (National Decision Day is May 1)
- Submit housing and enrollment deposits
- Write thank-you notes to recommenders
- Send out graduation announcements
- Senioritis is strong. Have a study and snack party with friends to stay on top of your school work together.

May

- Prepare for AP or final exams
- Plan grad party or family celebration
- Try on and hang up gown. Decorate cap if your school allows it.
- Get senior cap and gown photos

June

- Attend graduation rehearsals and final events • Confirm final transcript requests to colleges • Graduate and CELEBRATE! • Take a deep breath. Reflect. Hug it out. • Spend intentional time together before life changes