



Family Information Sheet One: Higher Education Options

Dear Family Member,

As you know, your student has been selected to participate in an exciting program called **Kids2-College**. As a part of this program, they will learn about different education and career options and the steps they need to take to prepare themselves for college.

About this Course

During this class, your student will learn about the following:

- How a student's interests, talents, and skills can be turned into a career.
- How continuing education can put students on the path to success.
- What colleges consider when they admit students.
- Steps students can take now to make sure they are ready for college.
- Programs that can support your students' college goals.

After each lesson, we will be sending an information sheet home to you. This way you can learn more about what is being discussed in class. Each information sheet will include an activity that you and your student can do together. We encourage you to use these activities to talk with your student about what they are learning in the Kids2College course.

At the end of the program, students will have the chance to experience college first hand when we take them on a college visit. This exciting event will allow students to connect what they've learned about education and careers with an actual college experience.

Lesson One

During today's lesson, your student learned more about the different kinds of schools they can attend after high school and the different types of degrees these schools offer. Attached to this letter you will find a summary of the information they discussed during the lesson.

It is important for family members to understand the variety of college degrees available and the types of schools that offer them. This will help you and your student decide which educational path to take to achieve career goals.

Your student also participated in an activity that helped them to see the financial benefits to continuing their education beyond high school. Ask your student to share their completed charts with you and discuss what they found.

Thank you for helping your student as they work towards making the college dream a reality!

Sincerely,

The Kids2College Team

I'm Going to College!

Kids2College Family Information Sheet



Educational Options

There are many reasons that students should consider continuing their education beyond high school. It is important that students and families understand their

educational options in the United States, as well as the benefits of continuing education beyond high school in order to make informed decisions about their educational choices.

Vocational Programs

Vocational or Trade Schools teach skills specific to a job. They are not focused on general education. Most of the jobs you can learn about at vocational schools are very hands-on. If you were interested in cosmetology, culinary arts, mechanics, or technology-related fields, you might attend a vocational school. If you graduate from a vocational school, you usually receive a certificate that shows employers you have completed a vocational program.

Academic Programs

When most people think of going to school after high school graduation, they think of college. Students who go to college work towards completing a degree. A degree shows that a student has met the requirements necessary to complete their program of study. Higher education degrees can be earned in one of two different types of schools:

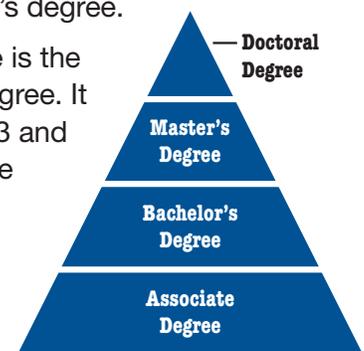
- **Community College** is a two-year school. You can earn an associate degree at community college. You can also take classes that may transfer to a four-year college or university.

- A **Four-year College or University** is a school where students work towards earning a bachelor's degree. Some four-year schools are called 'colleges' and others are 'universities'. There isn't too much difference between the two. Usually, colleges are smaller than universities, and sometimes offer fewer degrees. You also may earn a master's or doctoral degree from a four-year college or university.

What is an academic degree?

A **degree** shows that a student has met the requirements to complete a program of study.

- An **associate degree** usually requires two years of full-time study and can be earned at a community college. Associate degree programs usually are equal to the first two years of a bachelor's degree program.
- A **bachelor's degree** is an undergraduate degree that requires about four years of full-time study. It is required for some professions and for licensure in certain fields. It also is required for admission to advanced degree programs such as law and medicine.
- A **master's degree** is awarded to students who continue their education beyond a bachelor's degree. It usually takes 1–3 years to complete a master's degree.
- A **doctoral degree** is the most advanced degree. It can take between 3 and 7 years to complete a doctoral degree. A bachelor's degree and often a master's degree are required of students who want to earn a doctoral degree.



Going to College Can Pay Off

■ Better Employment Rates

Usually, the more education a person completes after high school, the more likely they are to have a job and the less likely they are to not have a job.

■ Higher Job Position

People with lower levels of education are less likely to have high level jobs. They are more likely to hold lower-level jobs. People with bachelor's or advanced degrees are more likely to be employed as managers and professionals.

■ Higher Income and Greater Lifetime Earnings

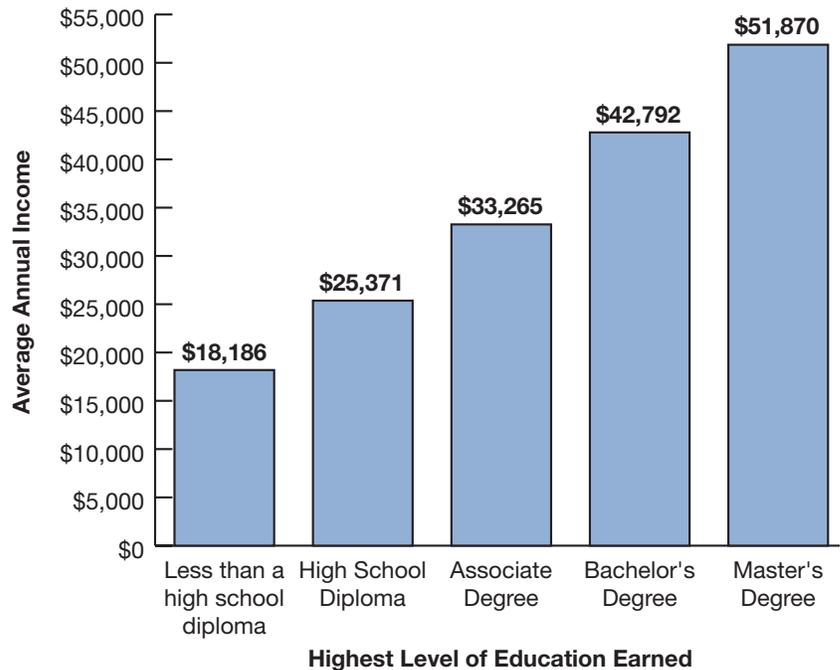
Most adults who have completed some education after high school earn more money than those who did not continue their education beyond high school. Their annual salaries are higher, and they make more money over their lifetimes.

Discussion Questions

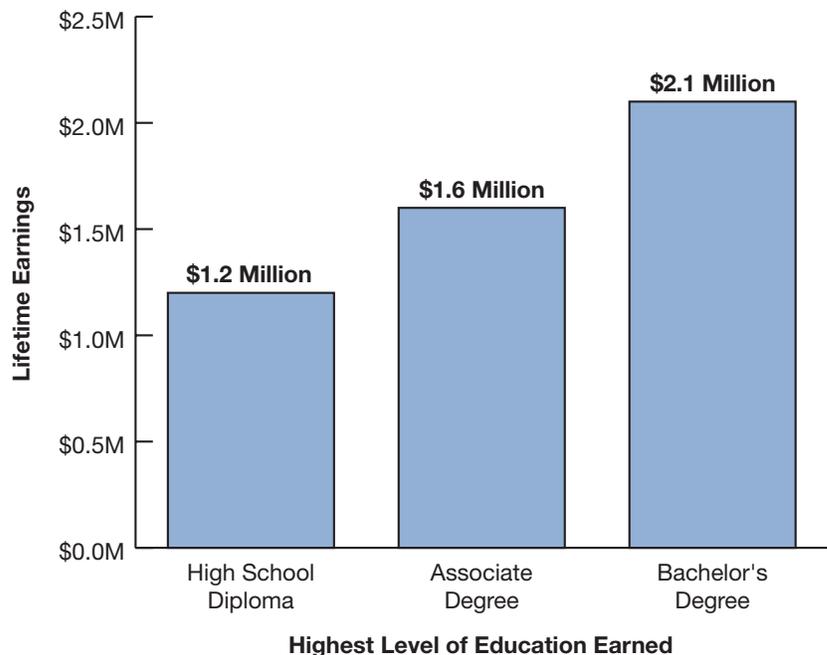
As a family, discuss the following questions together:

- Who do you know who went to college?
- Did he or she complete a degree? Can you tell how this degree changed or benefited his or her life?
- What degree(s) is your student interested in? What might your student want to study?

**Average Annual Adult Income
— United States¹**



**Lifetime Earnings (in millions of dollars)
— United States²**



¹ Source: Digest for Education Statistics 2004, Fig. 25

² Source: The Value of a College Degree, ERIC Digest, 2002

