



YOU HAVE A BIG FUTURE AHEAD EDUCATION



Big Brothers Big Sisters
OF METRO ATLANTA

Enroll in a 2-year or 4-year college, trade school, or internship to pursue a degree or certificate in a field you're interested in.

Options	What is it?	Why Might You Want to Choose This Option?	Potential Drawbacks to Consider
4-Year College or University	Attend a university for four years to earn a bachelor's degree in a chosen field.	<p><u>Advanced Knowledge:</u> To gain in-depth knowledge in a specific field or profession.</p> <p><u>Career Opportunities:</u> Opens doors to many career options requiring a bachelor's degree.</p> <p><u>Personal Growth:</u> Develops critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.</p>	<p><u>Cost:</u> Four-year colleges can be expensive, leading to student loan debt.</p> <p><u>Time:</u> Requires a significant time commitment, delaying entry into professional workforce.</p> <p><u>Academic Pressure:</u> May not suit those who prefer on-the-job learning.</p>
2-Year College or Community College	Study at a community college for two years to earn an associate's degree or prepare for transfer to a 4-year college.	<p><u>Affordability:</u> Cost-effective way to start higher education and transfer to a 4-year college.</p> <p><u>Flexibility:</u> Offers a range of programs and schedules for various goals.</p> <p><u>Skill Development:</u> Provides practical skills for immediate job entry or transfer.</p>	<p><u>Limited Degree Options:</u> Offers associate's degrees but may not cover all career paths.</p> <p><u>Transfers:</u> Transferring credits to a 4-year college can be complex.</p> <p><u>Stigma:</u> Some people associate community colleges with lower prestige.</p>
Tech or Trade School	Attend a specialized school to learn hands-on skills for specific careers, often leading to a certificate or diploma.	<p><u>Specialized Skills:</u> Focuses on hands-on training for specific trades or professions.</p> <p><u>Quick Entry:</u> Allows for rapid entry into the workforce.</p> <p><u>High Demand:</u> Leads to jobs in fields with high demand for skilled workers.</p>	<p><u>Narrow Focus:</u> Training is highly specialized, limiting career options.</p> <p><u>Cost:</u> Tuition can be high for some programs.</p> <p><u>Limited Academic Depth:</u> May not provide a broad academic education.</p>
Internship	Gain real-world work experience in a field of interest, either as an intern (usually in a white-collar job) or apprentice (typically in a trade).	<p><u>Real-World Experience:</u> Provides practical experience and networking in a chosen field.</p> <p><u>Skill Development:</u> Helps develop job-specific skills and industry knowledge.</p> <p><u>Career Path:</u> Offers a pathway to a career with on-the-job training.</p>	<p><u>Lower Pay:</u> Often pays less than full-time jobs during the training period.</p> <p><u>Uncertain Job Placement:</u> No guarantee of a permanent job after the internship/apprenticeship.</p> <p><u>Limited Fields:</u> Not all professions offer internship opportunities.</p>
Gap Year with Deferred Start	Take a break from formal education to explore personal interests, travel, work, or volunteer before making long-term plans.	<p><u>Personal Growth:</u> Provides time for self-discovery, travel, or pursuing personal interests.</p> <p><u>Life Experience:</u> Offers a break from formal education to gain life experiences.</p> <p><u>Clarity:</u> Allows time to clarify career goals and interests.</p>	<p><u>Career Delay:</u> May postpone career or academic advancement.</p> <p><u>Financial Constraints:</u> May not be feasible for those with financial responsibilities.</p> <p><u>Lack of Structure:</u> Some may find it challenging to maintain discipline and focus.</p>

Check out the next page to learn how to get started!





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Options	What steps should you take to pursue your path?
 <p>4-Year College or University</p> <p>2-Year College or Community College</p> <p>Tech or Trade School</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>High School Diploma</u>- Graduating High School or achieving a GED is the last step in this process, but it's important to check early to to be sure you're on-track to graduate before it's too late. Have you checked you GPA lately? (note: a GED is not accepted by all colleges) 2. <u>Research Options</u>- Talk with your school counselor, teachers, your mentor and other community members about their own experience; research places that fit what you're looking for. 3. <u>Apply for Financial Aid</u> - There are many forms of financial aid (scholarships and grants are words you'll hear a lot). Be sure to fill out the FAFSA in the Fall semester; you can apply for many scholarships through your high school, clubs, and post-high school institutions. 4. <u>ACT/SAT or Specialized Placement Test</u>- Talk with your school counselor to learn how to sign up to take the ACT or SAT (it's a good idea to try both!) 5. <u>Transcripts or Recommendations</u>- Talk to teachers who know you well to ask them to write a recommendation for you (there will be a place in your application that asks for that); additionally, talk to your school clerk about how to request your transcripts (you'll submit those with your application). 6. <u>Apply</u>- Follow the application process on the school's website 7. <u>Acceptance</u>- You'll submit your applications in the Winter or Spring Semester; be on the lookout for acceptance letters via mail and email after that!
<p>Internship</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>High School Diploma</u>- Graduating High School is the last step in this process, but it's important to check early to to be sure you're on-track to graduate before it's too late. Have you checked you GPA lately? 2. <u>Research Options</u>- Talk with your school counselor, teachers, your mentor and other community members about their own experience; research places that fit what you're looking for. 3. <u>Apply</u>- Follow the application process on the company's website 4. <u>Interview</u>- Most Internships will require an interview, so be sure to practice talking about your skills, prepare your resume, and put together a professional outfit, and most importantly, be confident in yourself!
<p>Gap Year with Deferred Start</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>College Acceptance</u>- If you're planning to defer your college start date, you'll need to be sure you have been accepted first, so be sure to follow the steps listed above for college paths. 2. <u>Plan Activities</u>- Taking a year between high school graduation and college can be a great way to learn about yourself and the world, but in order to make the most of it, you'll need to plan. What are you hoping to accomplish and learn in that year? Do you have activities planned to help you achieve that? 3. <u>Financial Planning</u>- Take time to consider how much the activities you have planned will cost, including travel costs, food, and where you're staying.

