

E80

Speaker 1 0:00

Announcer, welcome to be evolved a podcast for parents and educators who prioritize developing possibility and expansion within the total educational process for themselves and their children or students. We invite you to listen to the podcast with your child or student in mind and with yourself at the center of the learning experience. Ultimately, our goal is to bridge the gap between educational expertise and research, translating it into practical action. Gaining knowledge plus taking action is what it means to be evolved.

Speaker 2 0:40

I'm Sarah Bergen, Director of College Consulting at evolved education, and today we are starting at the beginning freshman year, which is such an exciting time. This is the year that most families are told this doesn't really count. And my advice to you is that that's not quite true. Freshman year definitely matters, but probably not in the way that you think about it. So let's kind of think about freshman year and how to use this year wisely, without really overdoing it, or without putting too much pressure on the students. So this freshman year, we're really thinking about building the right foundation for college. So what do colleges really care about in freshman year? Right? You think they're a ninth grader. They're just starting high school. So colleges are not looking for ninth graders to have a perfectly polished resume, right? They are ninth graders exactly that. So they're looking for evidence that a student can kind of handle adjustments and expectations, that they can handle increased independence in school, moving from middle to high school and really beginning to build consistent and strong habits academically. So freshman year is really setting the baseline for a student right. It shows and tells the colleges how a student handled the transition to high school, right, whether early struggles that they may have experienced whether those are academic, whether those are socially. How did they handle those? Did they turn them into growth? Did they become setbacks? And whether, really, after that adjustment to high school, their academic patterns improve. Were consistent? Did they decline really? What is this baseline? Okay, freshman year grades do count, right? Some people, again, think, well, it doesn't count its freshman year, but especially at highly selective colleges. We really do need to be thinking about freshman year grades. But again, we don't want to panic over the freshman year. We don't want to put too much stress on it, but we do want to be strategic about thinking about freshman year. So kind of top priority here is strong academic habits, right? Setting that foundation for high school. So learning how to be a high school student. We kind of forget that with ninth graders, right? They really need to learn and understand what it means to be a high schooler. So what does that mean? Time management, effective study skills, self advocacy. We talked about this in the overview podcast as well. Right? Asking for help. This is something that we often help students navigate. How do you approach a teacher? How might you email a teacher and say, Hey, I really don't get this and learning how a teacher really assesses and looks at your work, you have to understand the actual teacher. So a student may get B's during freshman year, but if there's building strong habits, right, they're often going to outperform a student who might get straight A's, right? Because it's about building that baseline and growth over time. Okay, this is also a

year to take appropriately challenging classes, okay? We don't want to have extremes. We want that appropriate balance in freshman year. So we want to build confidence. We don't want students to be stressed out about freshman year, or fearful of freshman year, or how this fits into the context of the college process. Colleges really like to see upward trends. Okay? Again, we are not looking for perfection from a 14 year old. Okay. Another important part is the extracurricular exploration. So we talk about this as being one of those five major parts of the application process. So this is really about trying new things. We're not asking students to completely commit. So check out clubs that are in line with your interests, okay, sports, arts, community service, okay, this is just as important as finding things that you do like. It is also important to help you navigate what might not be a good fit for you. Okay, colleges do not want a long, extensive list of things that don't really have any meaning. Okay, we don't want students just doing things because they look good or doing them for college. Okay? We don't want to try to fit a student into a specific category super early on. Okay, so colleges in freshman year like to see curiosity initiative that early. Early engagement that ultimately we see growth over time. Okay, so think of this as like a research and development year, not the actual final production. Okay, social emotional adjustment. This is also a big priority. Okay, so sometimes students are starting at a new school in ninth grade, so new peers, new pressures, new expectations, so navigating all of those things and how a student might handle that process. Okay, we want students to feel grounded socially and emotionally. We want them to have this strong baseline and strong foundation so that they can perform at their best academically and with their activities and really build resilience that will ultimately help them later on and help them navigate setbacks later on in their high school years. So what are some things to not do? Okay? Don't go into freshman year thinking it doesn't matter. Okay, we don't want to go in trying to take the absolute hardest course load possible while trying to also navigate a transition to high school. We don't want to overload on activities just to put them on our resume. Okay, it's okay if you get a bad grade. Okay, we don't want to start comparing, okay, that comparison game between students. So those are the some things what not to do. Okay, if you are a parent and listening to this podcast, what can you do in this process? Okay, this is a big one. Normalize that starting high school is an adjustment, and it's hard, right? Help your students and encourage them to be organized and to be balanced. Maybe they need some outside support with organization or balance, and that's okay, right? Let your students learn from their mistakes. We all make mistakes. We also don't want to project any early college anxiety on our student. We, as a parent may have anxiety, but we don't want to put that onto our child. So we really want to help them. We want to support our students in the process and help them navigate and start to explore this process, but in a low pressure way. So if you'd take away one thing from freshman year, and if you only do one thing, focus on really building strong habits and confidence. Okay, really everything builds upon that. So strong habits and confidence. In the next episode, we'll talk about sophomore year, where things kind of start to pick up and really start to form if you're a parent of a high schooler, we put together a free resource that goes hand in hand with everything we cover in this podcast, a complete college application checklist that breaks down all five parts of a standout application and exactly what you do year by year from freshman to senior year. Download it free at evolvededucationcompany.com/college-consulting, or find the link in the show notes you.