

SAVING FOR COLLEGE?

Here are 12 Savings Strategies to Consider

Finding the money to invest for college can be a challenge, but with **careful budgeting and creative thinking**, you may be surprised how quickly savings can add up.

The following are **month-by-month ideas** to help your family “make the grade” when it comes to saving and overall planning for college.



JANUARY

New Year's Resolution- Creating a Plan and Saving Regularly in a Dedicated Account

It's New Year's resolution time and saving for college is a good one to add to your list. Step one is to evaluate your finances, review college savings priorities and set goals that you can work toward throughout the year. One option: a 529 plan which gives you an opportunity for savings to grow and compound on a tax-deferred basis, which is particularly important when you consider the short investment horizon associated with saving for a child's college education.

FEBRUARY

Make Saving Automatic

Discipline your savings habits. Check with your college savings plan provider to see if you can automate your contributions so that regular monthly payments are transferred directly from your bank account. Or consult the human resources office at work for help, as many companies offer direct deposit as an option to put part of your paycheck into a college savings account. The easier you make it to save, the less likely you may be tempted to skip a payment.

MARCH

Spring Cleaning – Review Household Finances to Save More for College

By cleaning out your closets as well as your budget this spring, you could uncover additional funds to boost college savings. Consider a garage sale, or consign clothes or items you no longer use to produce additional money to save for college. Another idea: Review your existing household budget to find new ways to cut back. For instance, packing a daily lunch for work rather than purchasing lunch could potentially save you \$100 or more a month – money that can be redirected to your child's college savings account as a regular contribution.

APRIL

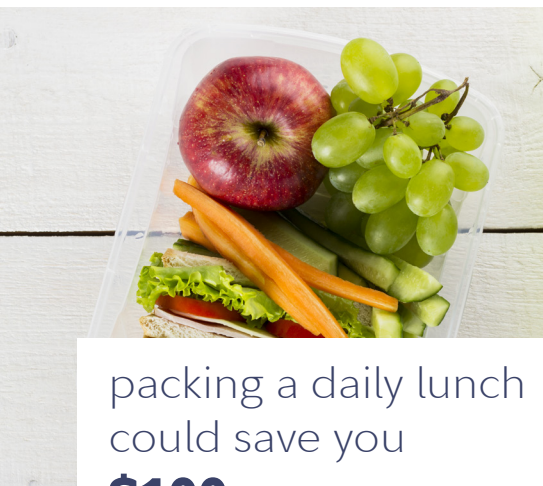
Tax-Time – Increase Monthly Contributions with Extra Tax Dollars

Tax season could yield additional money to put toward college savings – if you don't use the extra funds to splurge! Consider using a portion of any tax refund check you receive from Uncle Sam to increase regular monthly contributions to your child's college savings plan. Not expecting a refund this year? College dollars saved in a 529 plan can grow over time, and earnings can be withdrawn federal income tax free for qualified education expenses like tuition and books down the road.

MAY

Graduating from Day Care? Turn Monthly Expenses into Monthly Savings

Shifting a regular payment toward an investment goal is a painless way to turn a former expense into savings. Do you have a child starting school in the fall who will no longer require day care? Are you or your spouse changing jobs and eliminating a commute? Consider redirecting money formerly spent on day care payments or transportation costs to college savings. Since the family budget is accustomed to that outflow, saving for your child's education could be an easy transition.



packing a daily lunch could save you **\$100 or more a month**



July and August are the **two most common months for babies to be born in the U.S.**¹ If friends or co-workers are throwing a baby shower, spread the word you would welcome contributions to your baby's college future!

JUNE

Having a Summer Baby? Encourage Friends and Family to Help Kick-Start College Savings

July and August are the two most common months for babies to be born in the U.S.¹ If friends or co-workers are throwing you a baby shower, why not spread the word you would welcome contributions to your baby's college future? Chances are gift-givers will appreciate the convenience of writing a check and not having to find a present. For those with older children planning birthday parties, consider asking friends and family to contribute to your child's future education. While it may seem early, college costs continue to rise, so starting to save as early as possible may be the best way to prepare for the cost of higher education.

JULY

Create Your Own Family College Savings Matching Program

Put a little extra in your 529 account each month by taking advantage of cash back credit card rewards. In fact, parents who choose to save for a child's higher education with a Fidelity-managed 529 college savings plan can earn 2 percent cash back² on all eligible net purchases through the Fidelity Investments 529 College Rewards[®] Visa Signature[®] Card. Cardholders can keep their rewards working for them by linking the card to their Fidelity-managed 529 College Savings Plan account. From gas fill-ups and groceries to vacations and day-care, families have another opportunity to add to their college savings.

AUGUST

Head Back-to-School Early and Do Some Homework of Your Own

Since most families do not cover 100 percent of college costs with savings alone, it's never too early to start your homework on the funding options available to help finance the difference. Parents of older kids in particular need to take time to understand the ins-and-outs of the financial aid process, as well as the differences between Federal and private loans, scholarships and grants. Familiarize yourself with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as well as other informational websites. Fidelity's Student Loan Guide can help you get started.



79% of families with older children (age 15+) who had conversations about how college can affect earning potential, job prospects and future student loan debt, took action to implement a savings strategy³

SEPTEMBER

It's College Savings Month – Are You on Track?

To better understand total college costs and monthly savings needs, take advantage of online planning tools and calculators. By inputting your specific savings goals and projected contributions into our College Savings Calculator, you can get a sense of what your savings plan will require and if your current savings habits are keeping you on track. Other tools are available comparing the benefits of college savings options, looking at features like tax advantages, account maximums and impact on financial aid. Also, consider educational workshops and seminars offered by organizations that specialize in college saving and planning.

OCTOBER

Make College a Family Affair – Have 'The Talk' with Your Kids

As children approach college age, have detailed discussions about the total cost of college and the implications of college choices. It's important teenagers understand how their choices may affect their own financial future, including the potential student loan debt they may face. Seventy-nine percent of families with older children (age 15+) who had conversations about how college can affect earning potential, job prospects and future student loan debt, took action to implement a savings strategy.³ Asking kids to save some of their own earnings toward future college expenses can get them more engaged and accountable in the college planning process.



84% of parents would also welcome contributions to their child's college savings account instead of traditional gifts⁴

NOVEMBER

Revisit How You've Invested Your Child's College Savings

If you have a 529 college savings account, or other investments dedicated to college savings, take this time to revisit your investment strategy to make sure you are properly allocated, factoring in risk tolerance and investing time horizon. Your 529 plan manager or other financial professional can help review your accounts and situation and work with you to make any adjustments needed to maximize savings and keep you on track.

Remember, how you choose to save for college can be as unique as your child. But, whatever strategies you adopt, starting a savings plan now and saving regularly should increase your chances of meeting this important goal in the future.

DECEMBER

Unwrap College

This holiday season, parents, friends and family will spend \$767 per child on gifts.⁴ Since 84 percent of parents say their college education was one of the best gifts they ever received, why not consider encouraging family and friends to contribute to your child's college savings fund in lieu of, or as part of, a gift during the holidays? In fact, Fidelity research finds that 84 percent of parents would welcome contributions to their child's college savings account instead of traditional gifts. Giving has never been easier – you can even ask for contributions online. Check out Fidelity's college gifting service to learn more.

Need assistance in your college planning? Fidelity can help.

- Call us at **1-800-544-1914** for complimentary access to dedicated college planning representatives
- Get our Viewpoints on college planning at **www.fidelity.com/viewpoints/college-planning**
- Access our College Savings Resource Center at **www.fidelity.com/saving-for-college/overview**
- Find a Fidelity Investor Center near you at **www.fidelity.com/branchlocator/**
- Ask friends and family to contribute to your child's college savings fund at **www.fidelity.com/529-plans/college-gifting**

Please carefully consider each College Savings Plan's investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses before investing. For this and other information, contact Fidelity or visit fidelity.com for a free Fact Kit for Plans managed by Fidelity or request a free Offering Statement from your advisor or through advisor.fidelity.com. Read it carefully before you invest or send money.

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¹Provisional monthly and 12-month ending number of live births, deaths, and infant deaths and rates: United States, January 2014 - December 2015, December 2015.

²You will earn 2 Points per dollar in eligible net purchases (net purchases are purchases minus credits and returns) that you charge. Account must be open and in good standing to earn and redeem rewards and benefits. Upon approval, refer to your Program Rules for additional information. You may not redeem Reward Points, and you will immediately lose all of your Reward Points, if your Account is closed to future transactions (including, but not limited to, due to Program misuse, failure to pay, bankruptcy, or death). Reward Points will not expire as long as your Account remains open. Certain transactions are not eligible for Reward Points, including Advances (as defined in the Agreement, including wire transfers, travelers checks, money orders, foreign cash transactions, betting transactions, lottery tickets and ATM disbursements), Annual Fee, convenience checks, balance transfers, unauthorized or fraudulent charges, overdraft advances, interest charges, fees, credit insurance charges, transactions to fund certain prepaid card products, U.S. Mint purchases, or transactions to purchase cash convertible items. The 2% cash back rewards value applies only to Points redeemed for a deposit into an eligible Fidelity account. The redemption value is different if you choose to redeem your Points for other rewards such as travel options, merchandise, gift cards, and/or statement credit. Other restrictions apply. Full details appear in the Program Rules new card customers receive with their card. Establishment or ownership of a Fidelity account or other relationship with Fidelity Investments is not required to obtain a card or to be eligible to use Points to obtain any rewards offered under the program other than Fidelity Rewards.

³2016 College Savings Indicator Study, Fidelity Investments, September 2016

⁴All stats in December refer to the 2018 College Gifting Snapshot, Fidelity Investments, November 2018

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