

Early Decision and Early Action Admissions

EARLY DECISION plans are binding. Your child agrees to attend the college if accepted and if the college offers an adequate financial aid package. Although your child can apply to only one college for early decision, applying to other colleges through the regular admissions process is allowed. If your child is accepted by the first-choice college early, all other applications must be withdrawn.

EARLY ACTION plans are similar but not binding. If accepted, your child can choose to commit to the college immediately, or wait until the spring. Under these plans, your child may also apply early action to other colleges.

SINGLE-CHOICE EARLY ACTION is a new option offered by a few colleges. This plan works the same way as other early action plans, but candidates may not apply early (either Early Decision or Early Action) to any other college. Your child can still apply regular decision plans and is not required to give a final answer until the regular decision deadline.

Early Action and Early Decision plans should be used with discretion. If a student has any reservations about attending that school, or if their application profile is not complete, they should wait to apply regular decision. The applicant pool for early decisions is extremely discriminating. If your student's record is not superior in every way, he/she should devote their energies to strengthening it and applying to regular decision instead. In addition, many early decision/early action schools who deny a student early admission may not allow them to apply for regular decision.

Early admissions programs can be very advantageous to college applicants, depending on their profile and situation. A high school student who is sure of what school they want to go to and whose profile is superb can benefit from early admissions. However, students who have any questions at all are not encouraged to apply early, as they are then required to forgo all other options and commit to spending four years and thousands of dollars at a particular institution.