

## Money Zone: Education Planning

***Each member can print this out and have it available to follow and take notes.***

If you have children, chances are that providing a college education for them is high on your list of goals. With the cost of tuition, fees, room and board for four years at a private university averaging \$108,000 and state school costs averaging \$42,000 for four years, it's no wonder parents are in a cold sweat. Fortunately, a smart savings strategy and a little help from Uncle Sam can make it possible for almost anyone to get the college education they deserve.

### Icebreaker

If you went to college, how did you pay for your education? How did your parents plan for your college education?

### Things to Talk About

The best thing you can do is to start saving while your child is still in diapers. The earlier you begin socking away cash, the more opportunity your money has to grow through compounding. Even if you don't implement your investment strategy until your kids are in high school, you can make great strides toward meeting your savings goal—you'll just have to cut back in other areas and put every spare cent into your college fund.

Pick the question your Club finds most interesting. If there's still time, pick another one -- or make up your own!

- Do you think children should pay for their own college education? Do you think they should help with the costs?
- How early should you start planning for your children's college education?
- Do you think a name-brand education is important?
- Who can help you set up a college education planning program?
- What do you expect for your children's education and career?

### AS USUAL...

#### Catch Yourself Doing Something Right

Share your success with your fellow Club members:

- What Money Miracle (unexpected good fortune) did you have since last meeting?
- What did you do since last meeting to become a Money Star (a money-savvy gal in charge of her finances)? How did you further your financial goals?

#### What Will You Do Today?

Choose one **Small Step** to do before next meeting, and pledge to the group to do it. To select that 15-minute exercise, ask yourself these questions:

- What are your money challenges before the next meeting?
- What do you need to focus on?

- What is the next step in your life -- and what can you do before the next meeting to achieve it?

Don't drive yourself crazy. Remember, you can do anything for 15 minutes! For example:

- I will spend 15 minutes researching possible scholarships at [www.fastweb.org](http://www.fastweb.org).

Or

- I will spend 15 minutes filling out an application form for a tax-deferred savings program, such as a Section 529 or Roth IRA.

Or

- I will spend 15 minutes talking with my children about their college education plans. I will discuss how we will jointly plan to finance their educational goals.

You get the picture. This is like Goldilocks. Don't try to do too much. Don't try to do too little. Do it just right.

[More Cool Ideas for Small Steps](#)

## Money Magic

Choose one affirmation to motivate you to achieve your goals, something like:

- I am providing for my children's future.
- I am guiding my children on their journey into adulthood.
- I am a financially savvy woman.
- I am wise and know the value of a good education.

## The Money Zone for Next Meeting

Cast your vote: Does your Money Club want to stay in this Money Zone, or do you want to move on to the next Money Zone?

If your group decides to Stay in the Zone then, future Money Star, check out these fun articles so you can discuss them at your next meeting. Even if your group decides to move to the next Zone, you still can explore these on your own.

Searching the Scholarship Database <http://www.fastweb.org>

Discussion questions:

- What scholarships did you find to fit your family's unique circumstances?
- How can you ensure that you apply for all of the scholarships for which your student qualifies?

Heading Back to School <http://www.back2college.com>

Discussion questions:

- Do these resources inspire you to consider going back to school?

- Which resources do you think you would find most helpful if you were to consider returning to school?

## Account Ownership: In Whose Name to Save?

<http://www.finaid.com/savings/accountownership.phtml>

Discussion questions:

- How does this information change your educational savings strategy?
- What new decisions are you going to make regarding your savings plans?

## **Just for You**

Before the next Money Club meeting, do the Just for You Exercise called “Calculating the Costs”

<http://www.moneyclubs.com/tobeposted>.

*Don't skip a meeting if you don't get this done. Half of life is showing up, Money Clubs included. You can tell the group you didn't get it done, and they will encourage you (not bug you) to make a date to do it soon.*

Discussion questions for your club meeting:

- What options do you think are best for your family's educational plan?
- How can you further educate yourself on your planning options?