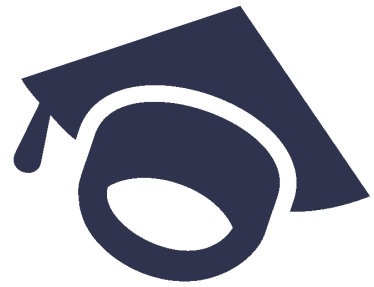


Family Friendly College Visit Tips



The Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC) partnered with [Western Dakota Tech](#) for family-friendly College Visits in March and October (2019). SFEC provided snacks and childcare activities so students and family members could focus on the campus tour and informational sessions. Additionally, SFEC's director, Morgan VonHaden, and College & Career Readiness Learning Specialist, Kelsey Smith, set up a community booth offering some fun STEAM projects for both families and kids. At the March evening event, over 50 people attended and of the 18 prospective students, six sent in applications for admission to Western Dakota Tech within days of the event! In October, the SFEC offered transportation to K-12 students and their families in western South Dakota. At both events, SFEC staff also arranged for partners offering wraparound supports and community resources to college students, such as Consumer Credit Counseling Services of the Black Hills and the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, to have booths representing the various agencies and to make connections with prospective students and families.

Tips for Students and Families:

- Read [this comprehensive article](#) first to learn about how to have a successful college visit.
 - **Action item: Set up a college visit together, and write down two questions you want answered.**
- We love the [additional advice from this post](#), especially the suggested timeline for college visits and next steps:
 - **May, junior year:** choose which colleges to visit
 - **June, junior year:** sign up for tours, set up interviews
 - **Late August and early September:** visit campuses
 - **January or February, senior year:** return to campus for interviews (if necessary)
 - **April, senior year:** receive acceptance letters
 - **May, senior year:** decide which college you'll attend

- Still have questions? Check out the [Khan Academy's tips for planning a visit](#).
 - **Action item:** Schedule a reminder in your calendar to send a thank you note a couple days after you visit campus.



Tips for Hosts and Postsecondary Partners:

- Include activities for younger children
- Consider offering transportation
 - **SFEC Lesson Learned:** Offering transportation to a Saturday college visit proved to be unsuccessful. SFEC staff reached out to local high schools and provided a flyer as an attempt to remove a potential barrier for a family or prospective student to visit campus. However, no one signed up to request a ride.
 - If you'd like to see the SFEC transportation flyer or download it as a sample to use for your event, click [HERE](#).
- Provide refreshments (snacks, drinks, perhaps a meal)
- Give attendees something to take home
 - This could be a flyer/brochure with additional information or a small gift. The SFEC gave away children's books to prospective students with young children.
- Partner with local agencies and organizations to offer additional community resources (see sample invitation language [HERE](#))
- Advertise, advertise, advertise! Click [HERE](#) to see sample flyers.

Additional Resources for Colleges/Postsecondary Institutions:

[This comprehensive "how to" article](#) features everything you should be thinking about when preparing to host prospective students and their support persons on campus.

- **Action item:** Follow up with your families after the visit! Just as students are encouraged to send a thank you note, it's important for the college/institution to make that outreach as well.

We love [these 10 tips for an effective college visit](#), especially the recommendation to share current students' perspectives. We know the college president likes campus, but we want to hear from someone living in the dorms and dining in the cafeteria.

