

# Pointers For Parents

## Saving For The Cost Of A College Education

(NAPSA)—When asked to put a value on their children's college education, most parents would reply, "immeasurable."

However, the cost of a four-year-college education in 2001, having increased at four times the rate of the average family income within the past 20 years, is anything but "immeasurable."

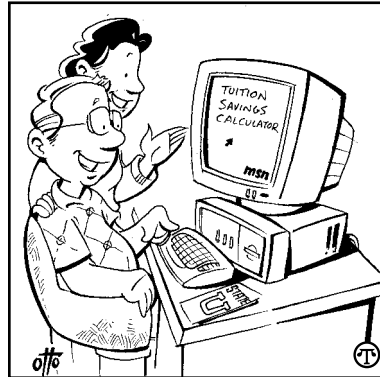
To hedge increased costs associated with obtaining a four-year degree, families are turning more and more to resources found on the Web.

In order to send your child to a four-year public university in 2001, on average, it will cost more than \$45,000. Similarly, the average cost of an elite private university will set you back more than \$125,000 for four years.

While these figures can be intimidating, resources available on the Internet can help families get a head start on planning for the cost of a college education, whether they have as little as one month left to prepare or as much as 18 years.

For example, MSN's MoneyCentral personal finance Web site provides a broad range of college financial planning tools. For parents or students, there is a tuition savings calculator to help develop a savings plan based on their specific goals. In addition, the site offers a step-by-step guide to saving for college, with tips on everything from investing strategies to making smart tax decisions. For the college bound high school student, there are also excellent guides covering the details of scholarships and financial aid information.

Using tools such as the tuition savings calculator can give you a good idea of how much you need to save, given your situation. Depending on how old your child currently



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is, that amount may be a wake up call. For instance:

- If your child is just entering high school, you will need to put away approximately \$1055 a month, at nine percent interest to cover all four years of college.
- Starting when your child is in fourth grade, assuming the same interest gains, your monthly savings requirement drops to \$568 a month.
- That number is reduced to only \$280 a month if you start saving when your child is born.

"We used the tuition savings calculator at MoneyCentral to determine how much we need to put away, ensuring that finances are not an obstacle when it comes time for our son to attend college," said Kim Pollock, mother of four-month-old son, Tanner. "Getting financially organized helped us feel less overwhelmed by the amount of money we'll need to put him through college in 2018."

If you would like more information about any of the college finance planning tools listed above, go to <http://moneycentral.msn.com/family/home.asp>.