



Tips for Parents: Taking a Year Off

Is your high school student considering taking a year off (also known as a “gap year”) after they graduate before starting college? You might be surprised to hear that most students that take this road do more exploring than slacking.

Gappers Headed for the Mainstream

Gappers—the term coined for students who take a year off before heading to college, are more common than you may think, and some experts think the trend is headed for the mainstream. Both Princeton and Harvard universities encourage taking a year off.

Why? Won't My Child Lose Their Momentum?

It's true that there are students that decide to take a year off because they're tired of book work and just want to relax. This group does tend to lose momentum and may not return after the year is over. Gappers, on the other hand, look to the year as a time to explore the world, learn more about it and find direction before finalizing a career choice.

What Do Gappers Do During the Year?

A growing group of Gappers are using the services of organizations that help them find a country to visit and volunteer work to do while they're there. Sometimes, these organizations work with colleges so the student can also be earning credit with real world service learning. In addition to service, many programs include travel within the area and educational trips and events. These experiences help many participants gain a broader world view and find their purpose in it.

How Do We Learn More?

Visit these websites to learn more about your options and see if taking a year off is the right choice for your student:

- www.carpediemeducation.org
- www.interimprograms.com
- www.leapnow.org
- www.planetgapyear.com
- www.gapyear.com
- www.takingoff.net
- www.globalroutes.org

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