1. Save for college in the parent’s name, not the student’s name. The impact on aid is small if the parent is the account owner.

2. A 529 college savings plan is treated as though it were a parent asset if it is owned by a dependent student or by a dependent student’s custodial parent. This has a minimal impact on eligibility for need-based financial aid.

3. A 529 college savings plan that is owned by the student’s grandparent, aunt, uncle, non-custodial parent, or any other third party will hurt eligibility for need-based financial aid.

4. Move money in a custodial bank or brokerage accounts, which reduce aid eligibility by 20% of the asset value, into a custodial 529 college savings plan to increase aid eligibility.

5. Spend student assets first, before using the parent’s money.