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How to Complete the FAFSA® Form When You Have Multiple Children

FAFSA® TIPS 6 minutes



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Parents

If you have more than one child in college, you'll need to consider four things when filling out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form:

1. You and each of your children need an FSA ID.
2. Each child will need to fill out a FAFSA form with parent information.
3. You must report the value of your education savings accounts for all children combined.
4. Having multiple children in college can affect your children's Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Read on for more details.





Before you fill out the FAFSA form, be sure to have ready all the things you'll need.

1 You and each of your children need an FSA ID.

An FSA ID is an account username and password combination associated with your Social Security number. It serves as your legal electronic signature throughout the financial aid process. You AND each of your children will need your own FSA IDs.

[Create an FSA ID](#)

2 Each child must complete the FAFSA® form.

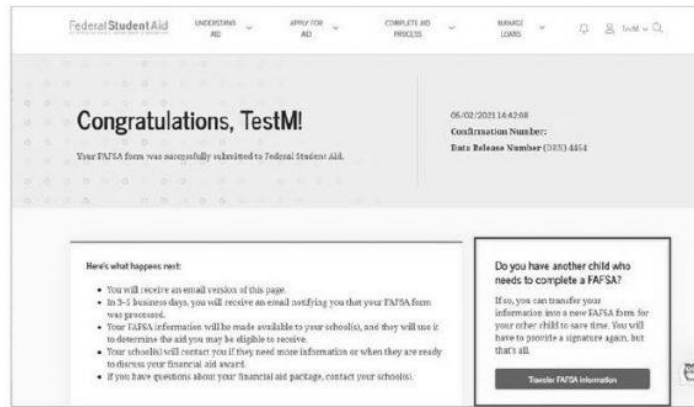
Each of your children will need to fill out a FAFSA form. Your children will need to provide your (parent) information on their 2022–23 FAFSA forms. This step isn't necessary if they are going to graduate school, were born before Jan. 1, 1999, or can answer "yes" to any of these dependency status questions.

[Start the FAFSA Form](#)

Note: This transfer option appears when you are logged in under the parent role. The option is available on [fafsa.gov](#), but it is NOT currently available on the myStudentAid mobile app.

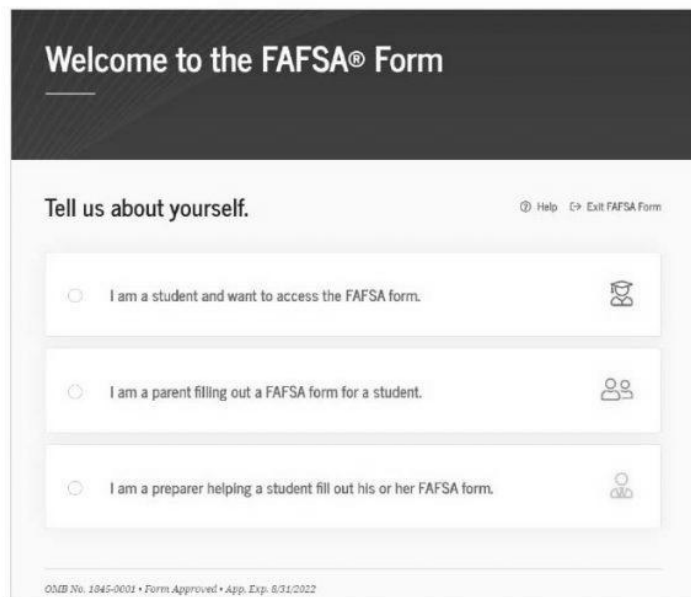
TIP: If you want the process to go as smoothly as possible, your second child should have his or her FSA ID on hand so you're ready for the next step.





When you successfully complete the FAFSA form, you'll see this confirmation page.

However, you can transfer users during one FAFSA session. After you're done filling out the FAFSA form for one child, select an arrow, a new window will open, and your other child will start his or her FAFSA form. We recommend that your child starts the FAFSA form by entering his or her FSA ID (not your FSA ID) using the (I am a student) option in the image below. However, if you are starting your child's FAFSA form, choose the other option (**I am a parent filling out a FAFSA form for a student**), and enter your child's information.



When you log in to the FAFSA form, you'll be asked whether you are the student or the parent borrower.

Regardless of who starts the application from this screen, the FAFSA form remains the student's application; so, when the FAFSA form says "you," it's referring to the student. If the FAFSA form is asking for parent information, it will specify that.



After you select the FAFSA form, you will complete and create a save key. The form will take you to the introduction page, which will indicate that it copied parental data into your second child's FAFSA form.

Once you reach the parent information page, you will see your information prepopulated. Verify this info, proceed to sign and submit the FAFSA form, and you're done!

3 You must report the combined value of your education savings accounts for all children.

You must report the value of all education savings accounts owned by you, your child, or any other dependent children in your household as a parent investment. (Check out "What is the net worth of your parents' investments?" FAFSA help.) If you have education savings accounts for multiple children, you must report the **combined** current value of those accounts, even if some of those children are not in college yet or still completing a FAFSA form.

Example: Child 1 and 2 are filling out the FAFSA form. Child 3 is in 8th grade. They each have education savings accounts in their names.

- Child 1 account balance: \$20,000
- Child 2 account balance: \$13,000
- Child 3 account balance: \$8,000

You would add \$41,000 to any other parent investments you're required to report and input it when asked, "What is the net worth of your parents' investments?" on each of your children's FAFSA forms.

4 Multiple children can impact your children's Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Multiple children enrolled in college at the same time could impact your children's eligibility for need-based federal financial aid.

Don't ever assume your child won't qualify for aid, especially if they didn't qualify the previous year. **This is a huge mistake**, especially if you will have additional children entering college.

Schools use the following formula to determine how much aid your child is eligible to receive. **Cost of attendance (COA) – Expected Family Contribution (EFC) = financial need**

Let's break down this formula:

- **COA:** This will vary by school, so if you have two children attending different schools with different costs, their financial need may be different, even if their EFC is the same.



- **EFC:** The information you provide on the FAFSA form is used to calculate your child's Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Since we recognize that as a parent, your annual ability to pay per child decreases as you have more children enroll in college, we divide the expected parent contribution portion by the number of children you expect to have in college. This is how much you are expected to contribute.

Example: Let's assume that all your dependent children have identical financial information and that the calculated EFC with one child in college would be \$10,000. Here's how each child's EFC would change depending on the number of family members attending college full-time.

WHAT'S THE FORMULA TO DETERMINE YOUR FINANCIAL AID?

Here's an example:

\$36,880

Your school starts with the cost of attendance (COA)

\$26,500

— Then subtracts your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

\$10,380

This number represents your financial need

Federal
Student
Aid

The formula that determines your financial aid involves taking your school's cost of attendance and subtracting your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

- **Financial need:** Schools differ (sometimes greatly) in their ability to meet each student's financial need. To compare average school costs, visit the *College Scorecard*.

