It's never too early to start exploring colleges. Think about the characteristics of a school that would be a good fit for you—with over 4,000 colleges and universities across the U.S. (and 50+ in Maryland), there will be several that will be a good fit! Start by considering the following things:

1. **Majors & Programs**
   What are you interested in doing as a career? What type of degree will you need? What colleges offer the majors or programs that will help you get there?

2. **Actual Cost**
   Using a combination of savings, financial aid and other income, how will you pay for college? Remember to look at the net price, which is an estimate of what you will actually pay given your specific circumstances. Consider what percentage of students receive financial aid and whether the college will meet full need.

3. **Campus Environment**
   Do you want to attend a small or large school? Do you want to live on-campus, in your own apartment or at home? Are you interested in attending a religiously-affiliated college, a military academy or a school that serves a specific population?

4. **Location**
   Do you want a college that is close to home or far away? Do you want to be in a city, in a small town, or somewhere in between?

5. **Extra-curricular & Support Services**
   What activities, organizations, sports or experiences do you want to participate in? What support services (like tutoring, disability services, or counseling) would you want to take advantage of?

6. **Graduation Rates**
   What percentage of students are successful in completing degree?