

College Scholarships in Middle School

Learn how your tween can win college scholarships before she even gets to high school.



Every penny counts when it comes to paying for college, and it's never too early to start saving for the future. In addition to savings plans, scholarship opportunities are available for children as young as 8 years old, and they are a great way for students to start thinking about how they will fund their college education.

- **The Old College Try**

Scholarships for children ages 13 and younger typically don't come from colleges, which are more likely to offer money to current students or those about to enroll. It's more common for higher education institutions to offer programs aimed at giving middle school students a taste of the college experience. At the University of Rochester, for example, students chosen to participate in their middle school program focus on a particular subject area by taking hands-on, non-credit classes.

- **Money in the Bank**

Monetary scholarships that are available for children age 13 and under run the gamut from awarding kids who perform acts of kindness to [art competitions](#), science experiments, and essay contests.

It's also common for businesses that are trying to promote a product to a specific age group to provide scholarship money tied to that product. Since 1968, the [National Marbles Tournament](#) has been awarding scholarship money to its tournament winner. The money can be used for any advanced education, including college, technical school, or computer school. The tournament started offering scholarships of \$500 and is now offering \$2,000.

The [Jack Kent Cooke Foundation](#), started by the late owner of the Washington Redskins and Los Angeles Lakers, aims to help low-income, high-achieving middle-school children reach their college goals through their Young Scholars program. It chooses 75 7th grade recipients from among 1,200 applicants to receive awards over the course of their middle school, high school, undergraduate, and graduate years.

- **Showing You the Money**

A full listing of scholarships for this age group is available at [FinAid.org](#). That's important to know, because many of these opportunities aren't easy to find. Due to privacy concerns, most free scholarship matching sites can't list awards for children under the age of 14.

Middle-school scholarships are also hard to find because there aren't many of them. Most of the college-gearred programs reaching out to middle-school students place the emphasis on the planning and preparation needed to get them into the right college. At [studentaid.ed.gov](#), run by the U.S. Department of Education, click on the middle-school link, and you'll find a page filled with information to help kids in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades start thinking about the scholarship process.