**[5 Ways Parents Like You Cash-Flow College (Without Sacrificing Retirement)](http://blog.smartdollar.com/blog/2015/4/23/5-ways-parents-like-you-cash-flow-college-without-sacrificing-retirement)**

If you have kids who will start college soon, it’s no surprise to you that three out of four parents in your shoes say they are concerned about having enough money to help their kids pay for school. Many want to help but have their own financial challenges to overcome.

How can you get your kids through school and still pay off debt or save for retirement?

We’ve heard from plenty of families who are cash-flowing or have successfully cash-flowed their kids’ college while still meeting their own financial goals:

**1. Every Little Bit Helps**

Angela C. from Lavon, TX, said she and her husband are on Baby Step 2, so they don’t have the extra income to help pay for school expenses. “Our son has a scholarship and works full-time on summer and winter breaks and part-time during school,” Angela said. She and dad help by providing free room and board so they can keep rolling on their debt snowball.

**2. Extra Income Makes a Big Difference**

Jenny S. from Moscow, ID, has nine kids to put through college and no college savings. So far, they’ve paid for the first two years of their oldest child’s college with extra income they make renting out an apartment in their home to vacationers. “The business is thriving, and I’m blessed to say that I’m saving for my kids’ college exclusively from this money,” Jenny said. “I’m just one year ahead of them, but I’m ahead!”

**3. Pass on Unaffordable Schools**

Thanks to the lessons she learned from Dave Ramsey, Janet M., a single mom from Gorham, ME, nixed her daughter’s first choice of school because of its high price tag. “I would have ended up cosigning a loan for $50,000 this summer,” she said. Her daughter instead accepted a merit scholarship to attend a local college. Janet will resume her retirement savings once she’s saved up her emergency fund.

**4. Take the Sinking Fund Approach**

Michael L. from Bluffton, SC, cash-flows expenses for his two college students with a sinking fund. “We calculate the anticipated costs for tuition and books and divide that amount by the number of months left until the next term,” he explained. Then they deposit that amount every month into a money market account. “We just wrote checks for approximately $9,000 for tuition for both kids for the next term.”

**5. Take Advantage of Advanced Placement Classes**

If your school offers them, encourage your college-bound high school students to take advanced placement classes. Deric L. from Wilsonville, OR, said his daughter took as many AP classes as she could, and that, combined with high ACT/SAT test scores, allowed her to enter college as a sophomore, saving them the cost of a year’s tuition.

***Bonus Tip:***

An experienced financial advisor will be a huge help in developing a plan that will get your family through the college years.

An advisor with the heart of a teacher will take the time to sit down with you and evaluate where you are now, outline the steps you’ll need to take to get to where you want to be and advise you on how to take action on those steps.

**You Can Do It Too With A Solid Plan**

There are a million different ways to get through college without debt. But one thing’s certain: If you, the parent, choose to take on debt or sacrifice your income to pay for college instead of paying off debt or saving for emergencies and investing for retirement, you will end up with painfully few options as you face your future.

You can feel more confident about facing the college crossroads when you have a clear plan. You’ll know that if you take steps A, B and C, you’ll set yourself up for a secure financial future.