



ED vs EA vs RD Decision Worksheet

The three application rounds, and the questions that pick the right one.

	Early Decision (ED)	Early Action (EA)	Regular Decision (RD)
Deadline	Nov 1 or Nov 15	Nov 1 or Nov 15	Early January (typically)
Binding?	Yes — attend if admitted	No	No
Hear back	Mid-December	Dec–Feb	March–April
Apply elsewhere?	Only until admitted	Yes	Yes
Compare aid offers?	No — one offer	Yes	Yes
Scores needed by	Late October	Late October	December (often later)

Worksheet: talk these through as a family

- Is there one school your student would attend over every other, without needing to compare aid offers? (If not, ED is probably off the table.)

- Will testing and essays genuinely be ready by late October?

- Does the family need to compare financial aid packages before committing?

- Which schools on the list offer EA — the early answer with none of the binding?

- What does the counselor advise for this specific list?
