

BEST ADVICE FOR NEW COLLEGE PARENTS

By CollegiateParent

You can be proud of raising a son or daughter who is ready to take on new challenges and responsibilities, whether at a campus across the country or down the street. Here are a few pieces of advice to help with this transition:

1 Realize the academic challenges are much different from high school.

Your student will have to study harder, and more independently. Remind them of the many resources on campus available to help them be successful, such as tutoring and writing centers. Even students who are strong writers will need help with papers in college.

Remind your student that the syllabus they got on the first day of class will be their friend. Encourage them to make copies of the syllabus from each class so they can keep copies at their desk and also make a binder for their classes with the syllabus as the first page.

2 Understand your student might start college with the goal of being a doctor... and may end their four years with a degree in communication.

Many students change their goals as they go through college. Support your student as they explore opportunities and possibly work through the process of changing their major.

3 Encourage them to get to know their professors.

The professor can be a vital player in the life of your student and, down the road, a reference as your student applies for internships, jobs and perhaps graduate school. They should introduce themselves to the professor, ask questions and take advantage of the office hours professors set aside to talk to students.

4 Set expectations early.

Discuss what information you want your student to share with you. What do you expect from their grades? Do you want them to have a job during the school year? Review the Student Code of Conduct (found on the college website). Will your student share the tuition statement with you? Having these conversations early can prevent misunderstanding.

5 Talk about communication.

Talking about talking sounds funny, but it's an important subject to discuss before your student starts college. Will you set up a certain time of the week to check in? Will you text rather than phone?

When you do talk, ask open-ended questions that can't be answered by "yes" or "no" so they have to share. For example, "What have you enjoyed about the transition from high school to college?"

6 Know that your student will be busy.

With academics, activities, a social life and, hopefully, sleeping, their schedule is packed. Realize they aren't ignoring you or putting the family on the back burner — they are finding their place and learning to balance multiple responsibilities.

7 Send mail!

It reminds them that you and other family members are thinking about them. Students love opening that little mailbox and pulling out a letter or, better yet, a slip telling them they have a package.

8 Don't rush in to solve their problems.

Growing up means taking responsibility for your own actions. Listen, offer suggestions and steer your student to campus resources. Let them know you have confidence in their ability to handle any problem. Refer them to the counseling center — sometimes it's easier to talk to someone who isn't a relative or friend.

9 Don't encourage them to come home every weekend.

Students need to acclimate to the campus culture, get involved with activities and connect with the new people surrounding them. Plus they usually have homework and should prioritize studying.

10 Make plans to visit.

Take advantage of events the college hosts for family members. Family Weekend is a great time to be on campus and get a glimpse into your student's new life. Make your plans to attend now!



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