

Staying Healthy | Learning From Mistakes | Career Readiness

CollegiateParent

MAGAZINE

National | Fall 2021

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the Loop



Creating Their Best Life on Campus

**SOCIAL SKILLS ALL
STUDENTS NEED**

**6 WAYS TO WARD
OFF HOMESICKNESS**

**BEST TIPS FROM
A RECENT GRAD**

Welcome

from CollegiateParent!

There has never been a college move-in season as highly anticipated as this one. Fall 2021 is finally here.

Throughout the pandemic, our kids have made the best of virtual classes, canceled activities and events, lives put on hold.

Now they get to fully embrace the college experience they've dreamed of and deserve.

CollegiateParent is so happy to be part of this celebratory transition with you and to share advice (from college professors and staff, current and former students, and your fellow parents) to help you and your student with the adjustment to college life.

Read on for tips about roommates, academic success, career prep, health, housing, budgets and more. Find an in-depth look at resilience (what is it, and how we can cultivate it in our students and ourselves?) from Adina Glickman, who writes the advice column on our website. Speaking of which, be sure to visit [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com) to explore a bounty of resources, and sign up for our parent newsletter (bit.ly/loop-enews) so you never miss a story.

Your own story as a college parent has just begun. Enjoy every moment.

Happy Fall!



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Advice

for New College Students From a Recent Grad

BY CAMBRIA PILGER

People often say college is the best four years of your life. I don't know if that's true, but I sure grew a lot in the process. Beyond my abundant credit loads each semester, I discovered independence and learned to be comfortable as myself.

Entering freshman year, I thought I knew what I wanted to study. I planned to double major in Spanish and business and then open my own coffee shop after graduating and travel the world on the side. Less than a semester in, I realized that wasn't my ultimate dream.

This leads to my first big takeaway: People give a lot of advice, and going to college is about discovering what advice (if any!) you want to follow.

My parents, teachers, friends and coworkers all encouraged me to do different things. Professors in classes I didn't care about encouraged me to minor in their subject, which was always flattering to hear even though I didn't want to do that.

It took a lot of processing my thoughts in writing and out loud for me to realize I wanted to major in journalism – and minor in Spanish and business.

I took classes that sounded interesting, even if they weren't required for my major, and these were some of the coolest courses! In some of them, I learned to critique pop culture, organize the layout of a newspaper and analyze romantic relationships. Even these helped me discover what I wanted to do because they taught me skills that I can incorporate into day-to-day interactions (less so on the newspaper layout, though).

It wasn't just the classes I took that influenced my discovery. I encourage your student to get involved in clubs and groups on and off campus because those can be pivotal experiences.

Working as an RA (Resident Assistant) for two years helped me realize that service and leadership are some of my passions. I learned how to deal with my own conflict and that of others, how to work closely in a team setting and how to have difficult, emotional conversations. I discovered that I want a career where I can serve and support others.

Another big lesson: The things I did for fun were almost more important than the degree I chose.

In high school, I was very involved in music and theater. I knew I wanted to continue with both of these in college, and they were some of the strongest balancing forces for me. By this, I mean that being in women's choir and helping out in the theater were essential creative outlets during the times when I was most overwhelmed.

Get involved in clubs and groups on and off campus because those can be pivotal experiences!

Some weeks, it felt like I had a thousand assignments due and no time to rest. Then I would go to choir rehearsal and leave an hour and a half later refreshed and calmed.

The arts also allowed me to meet some of my closest friends. I connected with a group of friends my freshman year but didn't stay with them because we lacked a shared interest. In the arts, I had common ground with other students, even though I wasn't studying music or theater.

I chose to get involved in choir because it's one of my passions, and it was probably more influential, overall, than most of my journalism classes. Encourage your student to focus on things that are fun and that allow them to express themselves. These may end up being more important than their major.

Finally, I learned that getting off campus and experiencing the community is a must.

I lived on campus for three years and didn't have a car. For a long time, I hesitated to venture far because I didn't know the area and was scared to take public transportation. My school describes this as being "underneath the pinecone curtain" (there are lots of towering pine trees).

But after a while, I found myself sometimes feeling a bit trapped. I started taking the bus downtown (or wherever I felt inspired to go that week) and realized that getting off campus helped me relax and rebalance.

Getting out of the dorms helped me get out of my head. As soon as I was on the bus, the racing, stress-filled thoughts changed to excitement and curiosity. I discovered cool buildings and met nice people (and weird ones) on the bus. I felt free, and I also learned that I could get pretty much anywhere without a car.

Whether your student is in their first or fifth year of college, I wish them good luck with everything they encounter. Encourage them to take time along the way to reflect on how they're growing academically, relationally and personally.



“What I Wish I’d Known”:

Upperclassmen Share Their Best Tips

BY AMY BALDWIN, ED.D.

Few things make me happier than the fresh start of a new academic year. Autumn leaves crackling under my leather boots, the faint sound of the college band playing at a football game... And this fall, after a year of pandemic restrictions on campus, there's even more to look forward to.

The excitement inspired me to reach out to several of my former students to ask, “What advice would you give incoming freshmen?” Here is what they had to say.

Just because it worked in high school doesn't mean it will in college.

Sadie, a high school athlete, was used to getting to school at 6 a.m. for swim practice and heading to her first class by 7:50 a.m. “I thought 8 a.m. classes in college would be easy, but I was wrong. An early morning schedule didn't work for me when I got to college.”

While your student may thrive in 8 a.m. college classes, Sadie's point is well taken: Just because it worked in high school doesn't mean it will in college. Early classes are not the only thing that may not work when your student gets to college – here are a few more tips from my former students:

- * **Get 6-8 hours of sleep a night.** While all-nighters may seem a rite of passage, getting too little sleep can have major negative effects on student health and well-being. Your student should aim for 6–8 hours each night to be at their best.
- * **Spread out studying over days before a test.** If your student got by with cramming in high school and still earned good grades, they will definitely need to change their study habits. The simple task of spacing out their study sessions over several days will make a positive difference in their college grades.
- * **Ask for help.** No one gets through college by doing everything themselves. In fact, professors expect students to ask for help during office hours, work with classmates to learn the material, and go to tutoring when they need extra support.



Plan the work, then work the plan.

If there was a common piece of advice among all the students I interviewed, it was the suggestion to get a planner or calendar and use it regularly. Some students used a personal planner that they wrote in every day; others used a large wall calendar to plot their tasks and due dates.

Claire, who confessed that she was a poor high school student, said scheduling her homework and studying made a huge difference in her attitude and lowered her stress. “I felt in control of my time. Using a calendar made it easier for me to stay on track – and my grades were better because of it.”

Other strategies for managing time and tasks:

- * **Read the syllabus.** Your student will find information about what they will be doing and when they will be doing it in a class.
- * **Create reminders.** Setting an alarm or reminder on their phone or using a sticky note will keep important tasks top of mind.
- * **Prioritize tasks.** Coach your student to learn how to prioritize tasks by importance and urgency. Studying for that quiz tomorrow? Important and urgent. Hanging out with friends to watch Netflix? Maybe not so important or urgent.

Find a community, make a friend, get involved.

Danny, the treasurer of his fraternity, shared that joining organizations and finding ways to develop leadership skills allowed him to open up and meet new people. All the students I interviewed emphasized the importance of making friends, finding groups to hang out with, and getting involved with organizations on campus.

Like Danny, many mentioned joining a sorority or fraternity, which provides opportunities to do all three of these things. But Greek life is not the only way to get connected. Encourage your student to do any and all of these:

- * **Practice speaking up and introducing themselves to other people.**

It is only awkward for a moment.

- * **Attend events on campus such as movie nights, guest speakers and musical acts.** Chances are good your student will meet people who have similar interests.

- * **Sign up for volunteer opportunities.** People who work together often play together. Many campus organizations schedule regular volunteer projects and it's a great way to make an impact on the community.

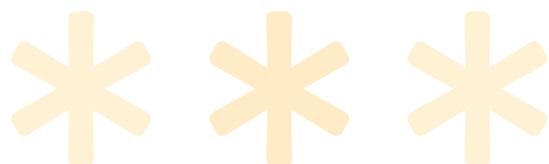
Explore what the college has to offer.

Hannah came to college with a plan to major in nursing, but then she took an anthropology class. “It blew my mind. I didn’t realize that I could study something so interesting! I talked to my advisor about changing my major to anthropology.”

Not every student will have an intellectual epiphany their first year, but every student should explore all that their college has to offer. This includes courses, events and guest speakers, and special experiences such as internships, study abroad and community service projects. Here are some other things your student can do to make the most of their first year.

- * **Do something different.** If your student loved math and science in high school, then encourage them to take an acting class or get involved with the arts community on campus. Doing something different will help them stretch and grow – and may create a new interest.

- * **Keep an open mind.** As students encounter new people and viewpoints in college, they have an opportunity to grow intellectually and personally. Encourage your student to frame everything as a learning experience.





Secrets of Roommate *Harmony*

Living with a roommate can be a challenging part of the transition to college but harmony is possible! Here are five tips to share with your first-year student.

BY KATE GALLOP

1. Go in with an open mind.

Before I got to college, I thought picking my roommate would be the make-or-break factor of freshman year. I imagined worst case scenarios, best case scenarios and everything in between.

Two years in, I realize how important it is to enter a new living situation with optimism and openness. My first-year roommate became someone who made me feel less lonely during my adjustment. College is a new experience for both of you. You will find what works for you and learn what you want in a sophomore roommate.

“If you shake off your expectations as best you can, you will have a more natural and positive relationship. I loved my freshman roommate, but even the people I know who didn’t learned more about themselves and learned to live with others better in the process.”

– Sophomore, Washington University in St. Louis

2. Set expectations before problems arise.

Unspoken expectations are at the root of a lot of conflict. Make your needs clear while also remaining open to your roommate’s preferences. Many colleges will connect random roommates through a short survey about living styles, and you will probably need to fill out a roommate agreement (going over things like cleanliness, schedules, visitors, etc.) in the first few weeks. Not all conflict is about room logistics, but having those expectations clear from the start can make living together much easier.

It’s necessary to talk about conflict as it comes up, but many misunderstandings can be avoided by talking upfront. This means giving your roommate the space to express concerns, too. Your RA can be a great resource for advice and conflict resolution if needed.

“My roommate would stay up a lot later most nights and I had a hard time sleeping with her desk light on. After this kept happening, I asked if she could find a common room on our floor to study in when I’m trying to sleep. She was really understanding, and it made living with her a lot easier.” – Sophomore, CU Boulder

3. *Be respectful of your shared space.*

For many people, college is the first time sharing a room. Keep in mind that things which may seem harmless to you could be frustrating for your roommate. Make sure to communicate, especially in the first few weeks as you establish a routine, and know that you might have to make some compromises.

There are a lot of ways to make life easier for your roommate: use headphones when they are in the room, don't go through their belongings, ask before borrowing things, take out trash before it smells, don't snooze your alarm, study in a common room if they go to bed early, ask before taking a call, and check in before bringing other people into the room.

“Being considerate of your roommate will encourage them to do the same.”

– Junior, Washington University in St. Louis

4. *Recognize that a good roommate and a good friend are different things.*

Living with someone is very different from being friends. There are so many things I don't care about when making friends: what temperature they like a room, how often they clean or take out the trash, and when they go to bed. It's good to get to know your roommate, but let go of the pressure to be best friends with them. Some of my friends with the best roommate relationships had nothing in common with them, but they respected each other and lived well together regardless.

“In the beginning of my freshman year, my roommate and I would go to events and grab food together, but as the year progressed we met more people, made different friends, and spent less time together. Even then, it was so nice to come back to my room and have someone to talk to about my day.” – Junior, University of San Francisco

5. *Spend time outside of the room.*

My favorite thing about starting college was having a full campus to explore. I found my favorite library, stayed on campus between classes, and enjoyed meals in different cafeterias. Leaving my room during the day and spending time away from my roommate made getting along much easier. Plus, then we had things to catch up on. Being out and about also makes it easier to meet new people.

Even if you're good friends with your roommate, still make an effort to develop other friendships. Talk to people on your floor, look for a club that interests you, and be friendly to people in your classes.

“Get to know your roommate, but get to know other people, too. Find clubs or other activities to do that aren't with your roommate so you both have space and alone time in your room.” – Junior, Miami University, Ohio

Your student's living situation is only one element of their freshman experience. Encourage them to take advantage of all the opportunities out there to find connection on campus!

6 Ways

to Ward Off Homesickness

BY SHARI BENDER

**They were home all summer.
The house was a mess, the
grocery bill doubled and the
laundry loads quadrupled.**

When it came to an end, you were ready. The joyous sounds of kids laughing into all hours of the early morning had worn thin, the mountain of shoes you were so happy to have back revealed as the grungy tripping hazards they were.

Your student was ready, too. First-years couldn't wait to move into their dorm and START COLLEGE! Returning students (who welcomed our doting ways and home-cooked meals for a while there) got tired of us knowing their every move. We were all ready for back-to-school – for real, in person and on campus.

But after we all settle into our fall routines, there may come those pangs of sadness. Parents may be super annoying at times, but with the crushing blow of a first failed test, a broken heart or just the everyday stresses and frustrations of college life, homesickness can creep in.

When your student is homesick (and freshmen aren't the only ones who experience this), a little love and reassurance can go a long way. It is less about the "home" and more about the "feeling."

Here are six ways to ward off homesickness, even before it begins, for a healthier, happier fall semester for your student.

Photos from Home

Studies show that looking at images of loved ones can help a person feel less anxious and less stressed. So, head to CVS or download an app like Shutterfly, FreePrints or Mixtiles and print out their favorite photos to decorate the dorm. Photo gifts like reusable water bottles, mugs and fridge magnets can be daily reminders that your student is loved.

And don't forget about Fido or Fluffy. Believe it or not (sorry Mom and Dad), one of the more challenging transitions your student may experience in college is living without their furry best friend. My grown children love to get photos and videos of their pets. In fact, if I miss a few days they often request one.

Letters/Cards

Emails and texts are great but can get lost in the shuffle. Stock up on half a dozen "Thinking of You" or funny cards and mail them every once in a while, just because. Most students love to get snail mail and they will likely put the card(s) on display for an instant perk up on a difficult day – or to magnify their good mood on a happy one.

FaceTime Calls

A regular schedule may not work for your student, and I find that picking a different time each week, with special attention to my child's calendar, is a welcome respite for both of us. I am not a FaceTime fan, as FaceTime seems to highlight my wrinkles and shatters my illusion of youth. But the kids prefer it and I really do love seeing their faces. Plus, it's easier to read emotions on FaceTime, and can help a parent look for potential signs of mental health struggles that can be masked by a voice only call.

Snap Streaks

If you don't know what I'm talking about, download the Snapchat app now. I may be certifiably obsessed but I can tell you that this is one of my favorite and consistent ways of keeping in touch with my kids, ages 20 and 24. I can take a picture – just for them – and send it along, whether it be of their empty room with an “I miss you” or an in-process squabble between our kitties, Irene and Gilbert. The kids in turn share tidbits of their lives, a shot of pavement (“just finished my run”) or a smiling friend out to lunch. It's an easy and fast way to connect, on everyone's own time.

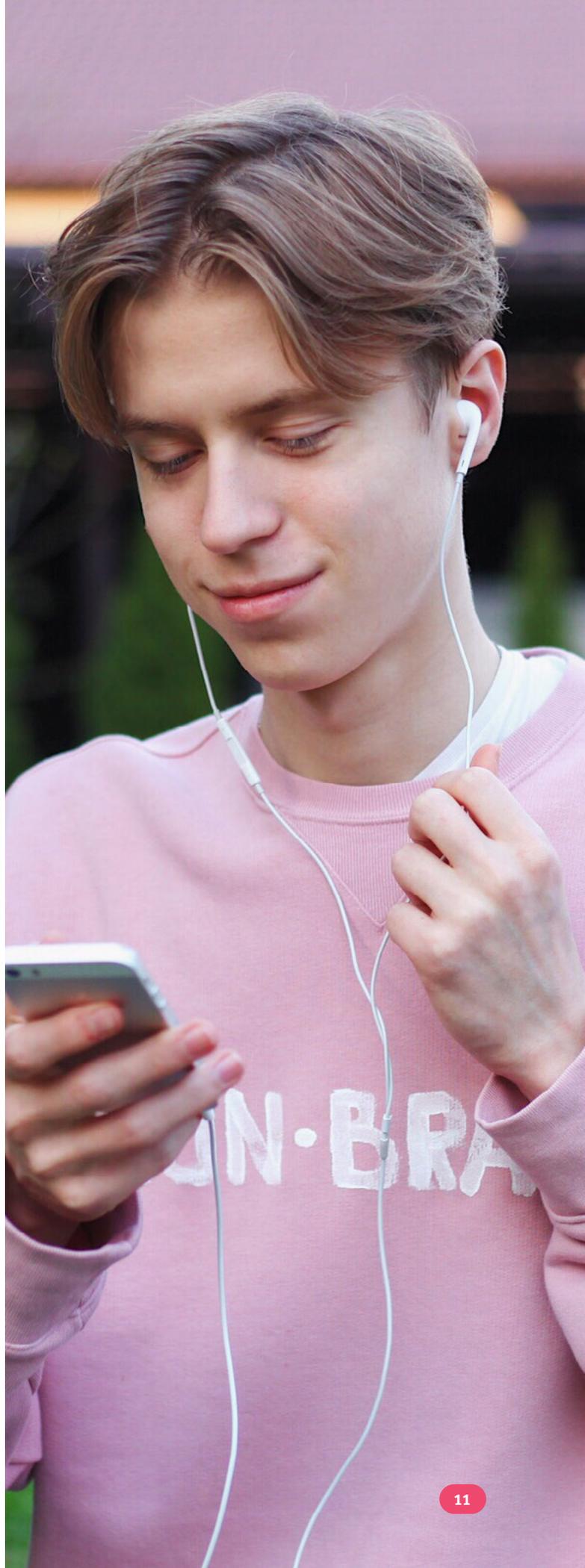
Care Packages

No need to wait for a birthday or holiday to send a care package. You can take the standard snail mail approach and fill a box with your student's favorite goodies, or send a digital care package via an electronic gift card. If your student has a roommate or suitemates, it's thoughtful to include a little something for them as well.

In-Person Visits

If you're lucky enough to live within driving distance, or you can afford a trip to visit your student, nothing can replace the feeling of an in-person visit (as the pandemic has shown us so well). Flying across the country not feasible for the weekend? Do you have a long-lost cousin or childhood friend who lives near your student's school? I was introduced to cousins during my time at college, 3,000 miles from my childhood home. They embraced me like only family can. Friends-like-family also can provide that home-away-from-home warmth that really bolsters a student's mental health.

Remember, if your college student can't shake their feelings of sadness, even with your efforts at TLC, there are campus resources like the counseling center to help them. It's okay to feel homesick, and definitely encourage them to ask for support if they need it.





Top Tips

for Successful Students and the Families That Support Them

BY JENNIFER SULLIVAN, M.S.

Here are my top tips for students and family members!

Successful Students:

1. Ask for Help

This sounds simple, but some students find it very difficult. This is because asking for help requires students to do two things: 1) acknowledge that they need help and 2) have the courage to ask for it.

In college, if students don't say anything about a problem, staff and professors will assume they have everything under control. If students are having trouble with anything (academics, roommates, mental health, etc.), they (not their parents) need to speak up. Students who are introverted or anxious may be daunted by the prospect of approaching their professor. Practicing or role-playing this kind of interaction can help them build confidence.

2. Find the Best Place to Do Their Homework

Where did your student do homework in high school – on their bed, at a desk, at the dining room table? Encourage them to reflect on their previous study habits, and then think about their ideal college study environment. Campuses have many different types of spaces for students to work, hang out and socialize. Your student should try a few spots to find one that makes them feel relaxed and productive.

3. Write Down Usernames and Passwords

New college students receive a school email address and username. Most colleges also require new students to set up an account in an online learning management system (LMS) for viewing grades and submitting assignments. Remembering all their usernames and passwords can be tough! Ideally, students find an organizational system they like before arriving on campus, but it's not too late. There are great phone apps that store and organize this important info.

4. Get to Know the Health and Counseling Center

Your student's physical and emotional health is as important as their academic success! Every college and university has health and mental health services available on campus. Even if your student doesn't need this care right away, chances are good that soon they, a roommate or friend will get sick or may need some support or a listening ear.

Encourage your student to explore services on the college's website and locate the health care building, its hours of operation and how to make an appointment. Some offices accept walk-in appointments while others schedule appointments in advance online.

1. Remember: College is a Marathon, Not a Sprint

Developing college-level academic, social, emotional and executive functioning skills takes time. During the early weeks and months of college, your student will rely heavily on the academic and social skills they developed in high school.

For some lucky students, this works just fine. Others are surprised to learn that their high school skills aren't helping them meet the rigors of college. This is completely normal! Successful students recognize which high school skills work and which don't. Trust the process and settle in for the marathon. The student who enters college will not be the same person who graduates. Walk alongside them and support them.

2. Expect Them to Make Mistakes

Expectations shape our attitudes and reactions. If we expect perfection, we will often (always?) be disappointed. If we expect some bumps in the road we won't be surprised to hit a pothole. College students must learn how to balance academic demands, friendships, nutrition, exercise, mental health, money management and more – without a parent around to help. Oversleeping an occasional class or ordering too many GrubHub deliveries in the first semester is common. They're figuring it out – just like you did at their age.

3. Avoid the Worst-Case-Scenario Mental Minefield

It will happen eventually – you get a text from your student with bad news. Or maybe it's a letter in the mail addressed to your student with midterm grades, or a social media post that sends up your parental red flag. Have you ever gone down this dangerous road? "They got a D! What if they fail the class? What if they fail all their classes?"

We parents tend to obsess over bad news. It's important to take care of yourself. Avoid the "what if" thoughts by doing something joyful and distracting: turn on uplifting music, offer to walk a neighbor's dog if you don't have one of your own, spend 30 minutes writing a letter (or nice comments on social media), meet a friend (and don't talk about your kids!).

4. Celebrate Their Homecomings

Students love coming home because it's where they can leave the pressures of school behind and just be themselves. However, parents may see school breaks as a chance to get stuff done (go to the dentist, get a haircut, visit Grandma!). Try not to overdo it. There are sure to be serious things to discuss (grades, their budget), but start by making them feel special when they come home – and loved. There's nothing they'll appreciate more.



Meet Jennifer

Jennifer Sullivan, M.S. is a private executive functioning coach for high school and college students and the founder of [Fast Forward College Coaching](#). Jennifer lives in southeastern Connecticut and helps students across the country improve their time management and organization skills. Jennifer currently teaches at UConn in the Neag School of Education. She and her husband are the parents of two teenagers. Find more of her expert advice in her book, *Sharing the Transition to College: Words of Advice for Diverse Learners and Their Families*.

Your child leaving for college affects your life as well. Allow yourself to feel your feelings. Treat yourself with patience and compassion. There's no rush to "have it all together" immediately. If you feel like texting your student to say "I love you," do it! They may need to read those words as much as you need to send them.



Make the Most of an ADVISING APPOINTMENT

BY AMY BALDWIN, ED.D.

“Dr. Baldwin, can I talk to you about something?” a student from my first-year seminar asked last semester. “I was thinking about majoring in business and minoring in psychology. But before I talk to my advisor, I wanted to see if you thought it was crazy to add a minor to my degree.”

A quick review of the student’s degree plan showed that she indeed had room to focus her elective courses into a psychology minor without lengthening her time to graduation. “Looks like you could do it easily. Tell me why you’re thinking about psychology,” I said.

The student talked about her long-term plan to work as a mortician. She thought that knowing about business and how people think would be beneficial to her career. I agreed, but I wanted the student’s advisor to weigh in and help her make that plan for the next four years. “Be sure to tell your advisor about your long-term goals and why you think this would be a good fit.”

Not every student feels comfortable talking to an advisor when they think their ideas may be viewed as “off the wall,” but trust me when I say that the advisors

at your student’s institution have heard it all and seen it all, and they can be pretty creative when it comes to helping a student find ways to complete their degrees.

And that’s not all an advisor can do. Advisors can help your student connect with resources if they are having academic, personal or financial challenges. In some cases, they can intervene on behalf of the student if there’s a class that is closed that they need to graduate.

New students should form a relationship with their advisor from the get-go, and begin to view their advisor as a guide, coach and support system. You can help your student by preparing them to use their advising appointments wisely. Here are three steps they should follow.

1. Plan the Visit with the Advisor

Any time they make an appointment with an advisor, your student should prepare ahead of time. The advisor needs to know what your student needs as soon as they get there.

- * **Create a list of questions or a goal to share with the advisor.** For example, your student might say, "I'm here to talk about what classes to take next semester and what would happen if I change my major."
- * **Look up any policies, forms or other information that will improve the conversation.** Your student may want to look at course descriptions or download a copy of their degree plan.
- * **Identify a note-taking strategy beforehand.** Will your student take handwritten notes or record the session? Your student will need notes about what was discussed and what steps they will take next.

2. Role Play the Conversation

I know from my own son, a college sophomore, that many students don't know what to say even with a list of questions in their hand. That's why it's important for them to practice the conversation ahead of time.

You don't have to know the ins-and-outs of college advising to be a good person for role play. You just need to help your student learn how to ask questions, take notes, and follow up with additional questions. Here's an example of a simple role play:

Advisor Role: What can I do for you today?

Student: I need some help registering for classes and I want to talk about changing my major.

Advisor Role: First, what classes are you thinking about taking? Then, tell me what is motivating you to change your major.

Assist your student in identifying what preparation they still need to do before their appointment and in clarifying what they want from the meeting.

3. Follow Up If Needed

One advising appointment will most likely not answer all your student's questions throughout their entire college career. A follow-up – even multiple ones – will most likely be needed.

Encourage your student to make a point to check in regularly with their advisor even if there is not a pressing issue. Other reasons to make an appointment with an advisor include:

- * Your student didn't get all their questions answered.
- * Your student's progress in a course or courses is in jeopardy and they need to know what will happen if they fail a class.
- * Your student isn't able to get into a class that is required for their degree plan.
- * Your student may not graduate on time.
- * Your student wants advice on a different major, a minor or a career pathway.

Dear Adina

Practical advice, opinions & commentary

COLLEGIATEPARENT.COM/DEAR-ADINA

A Q&A

With Director of Parent and Family Relations Kesha Williams



Q: What's your favorite part of your job?

It's hard to pick just one! I enjoy engaging with families who are excited about the institution I work for, and hearing about their students' unique college journeys. I love when I get a chance to help a family through a difficult situation when they thought there couldn't be a resolution. Finally, I like working with families and hearing their ideas about how I can help enhance their experience through programs and communication that will help them better support their student.

Q: What are the top concerns parents come to you with?

Parents are concerned about academic fulfillment, their student's health and well-being, employment and internship opportunities, safety and security, and financial needs.

Q: What's your favorite piece of advice to give the parents of new college students?

To trust the process and allow your student to experience their college journey. Understand there are going to be challenges, and there should be, but allow them to go through it. It builds character and resilience. It also teaches them critical thinking skills.





Q: Do you have a few other tips to share?

Help your student learn how to advocate for themselves. In other words, when they come to you with a challenge, don't be too quick to jump in. Listen to what they have to say and ask them what solutions they have come up with themselves. And remember, your relationship with your student will change and that is a good thing. Encourage them to grow and explore.

Q: What would you like people to know about the parent and family program office?

Parent and family professionals are here for you and want to help in any way we can. And your voice is stronger than you think. Colleges and universities value the opinions of parents and families and want to know what you care about and prioritize.

Q: What are you looking forward to most this coming school year?

Students and families being back on campus! It's going to be so exciting, especially for those incoming families and students who may not have had an opportunity to visit campus because of the pandemic. I can't wait for Family Weekend!



Meet Kesha

Kesha Williams is Director of Parent and Family Relations at Johns Hopkins University. In her role, she focuses on the transition and academic success of students by serving as a link between families and the school. She has over 20 years of experience in higher education, with 12 spent in parent and family programming. Kesha's advice is featured in a new book, *College Ready: Expert Advice for Parents to Simplify the College Transition*.



Expectations vs. Reality:

Perspectives From a Director of Residential Life

BY LATRINA ROGERS, M.S.ED.

First-year students are starting a new chapter: college! It's a new chapter for parents, too.

As a Director of Residential Life, I know it's not easy to leave your student on their own, whether this is the first or third time you've taken a child to college. It's natural to experience a myriad of emotions, and sometimes anxiety predominates. You've been nurturing your student through every stage of life, and the thought of not being there as they navigate new experiences is nerve-wracking. Even the parents of first-year commuter students are nervous (though their students come home daily). These emerging adults are still your babies!

Campus housing staff are aware of how parents are feeling during the first semester of their student's college journey. Many institutions offer programs, groups and events for family members to create a community of support. We're there for you even as we encourage you to step back a bit to show confidence and trust in your student. Giving them space to develop into the person they desire to become is one of the goals of higher education.

Your first-year student's living situation will play an important role in their adjustment to college. Schools want students to have a positive residential life experience! But it's important to remember that there is no way to completely avoid some level of awkwardness or adversity during a student's time on campus.

In recent years, I've found that many parents have unrealistic expectations of campus housing staff. There can be a "customer service" mindset, often accompanied by a sense that campus housing has an obligation to make things right for the customer (whether that's the student or parent). To avoid confusion and disappointment about campus housing policies and processes, here are three things it can be helpful to understand.

1. Communication will come from your student (not housing staff).

Many parents expect to receive a high level of personal attention from campus housing staff and get a phone call whenever there's an issue with their student. In fact, college students are considered adults, and laws such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) are in place to protect their privacy.

There are staff available to support students in every aspect of the college experience, but it is the student's responsibility to reach out for assistance. There are many ways students can connect with campus resources and procedures in place for students who are struggling, whether academically or personally.

Housing staff will not call parents at every point of adversity; instead, it's the student's responsibility to communicate with their parents or guardians. However, housing staff can call parents for drug- and alcohol-related issues or when a student is a danger to themselves or others.

2. We're devoted to students' well-being, but don't keep tabs on them.

Another common expectation some parents have is that campus housing staff will help them track the whereabouts of their students. We often hear from parents concerned because their student isn't answering the phone. Parents even arrive on campus and want to enter a student's room "just to check in."

We understand parents worry if they don't hear regularly from their student. It takes a while to get used to the fact that you no longer know at all times where they are and what they're doing. It's natural to want to make sure they're okay.

However, most residence halls have visitor policies which apply to family members, too. And unless it's an emergency, there's not much housing staff can do about locating a student who is not in their room or answering their phone. If there is an emergency with a student who hasn't been seen or heard from for a specific amount of time, typically that situation is given to Public Safety.

Take some time during these early days of college to make a plan with your student about how often you will text or talk. This will put your mind at ease.

3. Your student will learn to do things on their own!

Over the years, I've had parents make some jaw-dropping requests such as personally waking up their student for class, cleaning rooms and helping students pack for move-out. Maybe because I'm known as "The Dorm Mom," they assume I'll do things for students that the students' own parents might do at home.

I believe that these expectations spring from love and concern for their children. But since my goal is to foster independence, I encourage students to take care of things on their own. I'm always happy to help by providing clarification, verification or assistance finding resources to complete a task. And I've led classes in the residence halls (and taught private one-on-one lessons) on cooking, cleaning bathrooms, doing laundry and even time management.

College is a time of growth, and campus housing is the perfect supportive space for this growth to happen. So, keep the lines of communication with your student wide open. Ask them what challenging situations they faced this week, what campus resources they took advantage of – and what they learned about themselves and their own capabilities along the way.

How to Respond

WHEN THINGS GET HARD

BY JENNIFER SULLIVAN, M.S.



In many areas of our lives we proactively talk about failure – and sometimes even plan for it. For example, when buying a new laptop for your student to bring to school you were probably offered an extended warranty. Warranties are a safety net in case failure happens, but talking about it happening doesn't mean it *will* happen.

Often we're willing to talk about failure with our devices but view it as taboo to talk about failure with our young adults. It's important that we normalize and discuss struggle, and even failure, as something that is common and expected rather than a sign of weakness.

If your student struggles this semester in college, they (and you) are not alone! Read on to learn ways family members can respond and suggestions we can give our students to help them handle challenges they may face in college.

Why Students May Struggle

It's common for students to struggle in college especially during their freshman year. High school and college operate in two very different ways with two very different systems. The key to college success for your teen is learning their college's system as quickly as possible.

There's often a transition period between starting college and truly understanding the way college works. This can lead to struggle and discomfort as students try to use old high school habits in their new college environment. Some lucky students are able to use their high school academic and social skills to meet the rigors of higher education with success. However, most students discover that at least some of their high school habits haven't prepared them for the expectations of college.

Students may also struggle because of weak executive functioning skills, increased critical thinking expectations, and lack of structure in their time outside of class.

Before the Tough Times

Preparation Is Key!

I want to reassure you: talking about failure will not make it happen. Using an airplane metaphor, before takeoff the cabin crew demonstrates how to fasten your seatbelt, what to do if oxygen masks drop from above, etc. They're not trying to scare us or even suggest that an emergency will happen. Talking about a plan for a possible event is preparation.

The same strategy applies to college. Talking about academic struggle, or even failure, will not make it happen. Creating a plan for what to do if your student struggles is being proactive.

As you and your student create a proactive plan, I suggest researching their college website and making a list of contact information for various offices. Even though your student may not need it now, this contact list will be available when and if they do. Include names of directors, email addresses and phone numbers of offices on campus such as your student's academic

advisor, Registrar, Director of Residence Life, Director of the Disability Office, and health and counseling services. Colleges and universities don't have one point person who supports your student in the way that high school did. It's important to familiarize yourself with the new "players" at your student's college. This is a great activity for your student to do and then ask them to share this list with you!

During a Hard Time

Be Open About Your Own Struggles

Often I find that parents have high expectations for their new college students and unintentionally send a message of expecting perfection and success. Even if we don't use the exact words, our students feel afraid they'll disappoint us if they admit they're struggling.

If students understand that struggle is a commonality for everyone then they won't be as surprised when they confront challenges. I encourage you to be open and accepting of your teen's struggles, and honest about how you've struggled in your own life. If you attended college, share your own missteps! Your teen is navigating new territory just as you once did.

Adults know that mistakes happen and we move forward – it's important to share this perspective with our teens. The way we respond and react to their hard times will affect whether or not they share their next difficult time with us, too.

Encourage Reaching Out – to You (or Anyone)

Tough times in college may last for a few days or a few weeks (and sometimes longer). Students who have ways to cope with their feelings, and are able to recognize the tension, respond and move forward, are more successful than students who keep the tough times to themselves.

Encourage your teen to reach out, to you or to anyone on campus, when they are struggling. If they hesitate to share what's really going on in their life, don't pressure them. Instead suggest that they find someone they trust on campus to talk to. Resources include the counseling center, their academic advisor, residence hall student advisor (RA), dean of student life, disability support office staff member or a friend.

Here are conversation starters or openers to an email they can use:

- I'm feeling stuck in class and don't know what to do. **Do you have any suggestions?**
- I don't know what I need, but I know I'm not feeling like myself. **Can I make an appointment to talk about it?**
- Things feel really hard right now. **Can we talk together?**
- Everything feels overwhelming right now. **Do you have any advice?**

It's also helpful to find national crisis hotlines and have your student put them into their phone in case their feelings become overwhelming. It's better to have too many resources than not enough.

Remind Your Teen That They've Done Hard Things Before

When we're in the middle of a storm, it can be hard to remember previous experiences of weathering storms successfully. Tough times feel all-consuming; stressful situations create "blindness" in our brain where we only focus on what's around us.

Your teen may forget they are resilient. Remind them that they've been through hard times before. There was the athletic competition when they didn't give up, a test or project that was difficult but they earned a B. Give them positive reminders, texts and even notes in the mail that remind them how awesome they are – and that you know they will get through this.

What Is **Resilience** and How Do We **Cultivate It?**



BY ADINA GLICKMAN

We are born resilient. Our bodies and brains are wired for it. From the time we're tiny, trying to stand up and walk (and repeatedly falling down), we demonstrate our capacity for resilience, learning and changing in response to our failed efforts.

As we move through life, with every incorrectly answered math problem, grammar-challenged essay, failed exam, broken heart and job rejection (failing and falling down in every way possible), our capacity for resilience is urging us up, dusting us off and helping us go again.

Learning Is Everything

Evidence of our resilience shows up anywhere we have learned something. Think of the brain as a muscle that the process of learning strengthens. When you're building biceps, "feeling the burn" when you lift weights means you're pushing yourself beyond your previous weight-lifting capacity. That burn is literally the breaking down of muscle tissue, which stimulates the body to produce more muscle.

Intellectual burn recruits our brain cells to stimulate growth. In learning, "feeling the burn" shows up as frustration, disappointment and a host of associated aches and pains like anxiety and self-doubt.

Context Is Everything Else

A simple description of resilience is "bouncing back" after a setback. Picture a basketball bouncing on a solid wood floor. Then imagine that wood floor is instead a soft splooshy mattress. That basketball makes more of a thud than a sharp bounce.

Bouncing back is only possible when the context helps it. School, family and social culture are the contexts of our kids' lives that can help or hinder their ability to bounce back. A grown-up expressing disappointment in a teen's setbacks is like a splooshy mattress. School policies that punish rather than teach in response to a poor grade will make that teen go thud. To be the solid wood floor, we need to say, "Oh, you failed! How awesome! Even though that wasn't what you wanted and you feel bad, what can you learn from it? Let's go again."

To cultivate resilience, there has to be a disappointment, setback, rejection or outright failure.

The Six Elements of Resilience

Over the years, talking about failure and resilience with college and high school students as well as with educators and counselors, I've come to see six consistent ingredients that meld to form the delicious cupcake of resilience:

1. There's risk.

For some, that risk may be applying to an elite college. For others, dragging themselves out of bed when they feel like hiding under the covers is a risk. Whatever the action, the fact that a positive outcome isn't guaranteed is what makes it risky. To build resilience, there must be risk.

2. It matters.

The risk has to matter. Risking something that they don't care about one way or the other won't exercise the resilience muscle. They've got to be invested in the outcome of the risk.

3. There's failure.

Risking something that matters and succeeding is delightful, but it doesn't build muscle. To cultivate resilience, there has to be a disappointment, setback, rejection or outright failure.

4. There are feelings.

And they don't usually feel good. While some people may feel some relief amidst a setback, the harder feelings of shame, embarrassment, terror, depression, helplessness and so on are most common. Those feelings are important guideposts for the learning process. Moving the dial from bad feelings to better ones is a barometer of resilience blossoming.

5. There is sharing.

Telling someone, bringing the experience outside of their own head, invites all kinds of new perspectives. It also allows people around them to remind them of the bigger picture that may be obscured by the Big Deal that has its grip on them in the moment. And the burden of being alone with bad feelings becomes lighter in sharing them.

6. There is learning.

Whether your kid fails chemistry and then learns how to study more effectively or whether they realize they failed because they don't actually want to be a doctor, the net result of the failure is a change in behavior or attitude. If they don't find meaning from setbacks, the experience yields brittleness rather than resilience.



How to Cultivate Resilience

One of the most potent tools in cultivating resilience is remembering. If you can think back to a time when you failed or experienced a setback, remember what helped you. Identify each of the six ingredients and remind yourself:

- What was the risk?
- How much did I care?
- What was the fail?
- What did I feel?
- Who did I share it with?
- What did I learn/what meaning did I pull from the experience?

Those things that helped then can help always. Recalling what helped is like storing tools in your back pocket. The tools that worked for you will still work if you remember to use them.

Where We Get Stuck

A lot of people get stuck on “what did I feel?” People think they’re supposed to buck up, stand strong, even bury the ache or shame but it’s not going to be a delicious resilience cupcake without the feelings.

Other people get stuck on sharing the experience, which has a direct relationship with feeling the feelings. The more shameful the feelings, the less likely you are to want to tell anyone about it. But skipping past and not sharing the feelings short-circuits the natural grieving process that accompanies failure and bypasses the fruitful process of getting support and perspective.

Why grief? When we fail, we experience loss. We may temporarily lose our sense of self: I thought I was all that but maybe I’m not; my confidence is shaken. Or we may lose opportunities or resources: I didn’t get into the school I wanted to go to, or I failed a class and now I’m doing summer school instead of camp.

Just as there is no defined clock for grieving, there is no set time frame associated with building resilience. In fact, since one of the essential ingredients is learning from setbacks, the perspective that’s needed to find the meaning or the lesson isn’t available until we have some temporal distance. One of the reasons I don’t expect everyone to respond to a multi-year pandemic with resilience is because we’re still going through it. It’s nearly impossible to find the meaning in a prolonged tragedy until there’s been time to be immersed in something other than safety protocols.

Share Your Story

An important process for building resilience is telling our stories of failure. Either by casually letting your child know about your own stories of failure and resilience, or by formally inviting them to write a story about theirs, the process of developing a narrative around failure is powerful. It helps them step back and find perspective, and it helps them contextualize the experience, and the facts of failure and setbacks, as part of the greater narrative of who they are. In other words, telling the story helps them remember that they are more than their failures.

Be Authentic

All us boomers remember the deodorant commercial that espoused “Never let ‘em see you sweat.” I disagree. Sweating is human and we all do it, so let’s let our kids see it once in a while. While I’m not a fan of oversharing, it is enormously helpful for kids to know that adults fail, we fall, we get frustrated, and especially we learn from it.

I recommend talking about real life stuff right now that you are working through. With younger children, tell them about the time you left the restaurant and forgot to pay. Tell your teenager about your own not-so-perfect grades, or all the mistakes you made your first week on the job. Mostly, tell them how awful it felt and how you got through it by getting support, and *learning from it*.

Offer Perspective

When kids are struggling and think their failures define them, parents need to remind them that they are whole people. Remind them that even though they don't feel like they read fast enough or understand everything they're reading, they didn't used to be able to eat with a fork and spoon but they learned how. Or just because their PSAT scores are disappointing, their patience in teaching their little brother how to tie their shoes is real and it matters. In other words, while one part of a child may feel insufficient or broken, there are other parts that are soaring high and in great shape.

Let Go

As parents, it's tough to watch our kids feel bad. Remember that feeling the burn (i.e., feeling frustrated, self-doubting, stalled out) is a natural part of growing and learning. Fixing the problem – for example, intervening with the teacher or preemptively rewriting your kid's paper – undermines their learning. It also tacitly tells them we don't believe they can do it. If and when your student seems brittle or immobilized, show up with curiosity and love, and be the person holding a flashlight while they navigate the thicket.

Helping your child cultivate their resilience by reflecting on how they have already been resilient in life will go a long way towards helping them stay motivated and engaged. Remind them (and yourself!) that failing, getting it wrong, and being disappointed or frustrated are all necessary parts of learning that *everyone* experiences. Remind them that they learned to walk and feed themselves. And remind them that you were not always the fearless and confident parent you are today!



Meet Adina

Adina Glickman is the CEO of [Affinity Coaching](#) and the wise voice behind CollegiateParent's advice column, "Dear Adina." Adina was a psychotherapist before shifting into educational consulting, and directed Stanford University's Academic Coaching Program for 15 years. She founded the Academic Resilience Consortium, an international association of higher education faculty, staff and students. Adina is a mom and step-mom and lives in northern California with her husband of 25 years, two turtles and two cats.

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Help Your Student

Avoid Burnout

BY IANNI LE

Biting off more than they can chew is a common problem for college students, often because they are so driven and may underestimate the importance of their own mental health.

For a lot of college students, the idea of saying “no” to a work opportunity or extra credit assignment is a show of weakness they’ll do anything to avoid. Driven by a thirst to prove themselves, students push past their breaking points, refusing to recognize signs of exhaustion.

This is how academic burnout happens.

And this is why teaching your student when to say “no” is crucial as it will teach them the importance of boundaries.

How to Help Your Student Prevent Burnout

It may seem ironic, but academic burnout often develops when your student’s hard work pays off. After they’ve run themselves into the ground finishing the semester, they receive their grades and see how well they’ve done despite their exhaustion which, in turn, motivates them to follow the same pattern next semester.

As parents, it can be difficult to see why your student is so hard on themselves or even exactly how hard they’re pushing themselves (after all, tired college students are the worst communicators). When they finally come home for break, absolutely drained, it’s all you can do to help them relax in any way possible, knowing that the coming semester will likely be no easier.



Many students don't feel as if they have the power or even the right to say "no." All their worry and stress comes from inside themselves as they are often their own harshest critic.

As they embark on this exciting new chapter, set aside time to talk with your student about how they value their own time. Are they setting aside enough time to actually enjoy being a college student? Do they feel as if they have a duty to say "yes" to everything? Maybe it's not enough to understand that "no" is an option; do they realize they should feel no shame when they say "no"? Are they familiar with healthy coping mechanisms?

Coping Skills

By Rob Danzman, MS, NCC, LCMHC

Coping skills are not meant to fix anything. They buy us time to develop practices that become healthy routines. Whenever you communicate with your student, or have them home for break, take time to listen, observe and talk about healthier ways to think and behave – and about the possibility of connecting with a therapist or counselor if it feels like time for that positive, proactive step.

Social Coping Skills

Sharing their struggles and talking through the pain helps students more accurately identify problems and process uncomfortable feelings. It's also a chance to accept support and advice.

-  Share thoughts/feelings with a friend
– practice being vulnerable
-  Practice saying "no" to unhealthy situations
-  Ignore yourself (for a bit) and support a friend
-  Practice asking for what you need

Note: Using your in-person social network is different from spending time on social apps like Instagram and Snapchat. Comparing to others and FOMA (the fear of missing out) eats our brains and messes with our sense of belonging and self-worth.

Physical Coping Skills

These are about changing behaviors in order to improve a situation, decrease negative feelings, and promote mental space to get through tough things:

-  Focus on heartbeat for 30 seconds
-  Deep or mindful breathing
-  Reduce intake of sugar, caffeine and stimulants
-  Exercise for at least 30 minutes
-  Take a nap
-  Eat healthy foods: fruit, vegetables, nuts, salmon

Be sure to check out licensed clinical mental health counselor Rob Danzman's other articles in the Wellness section on CollegiateParent.com and follow our [Facebook page](#) to view our mental health Live events!



BY DEBORAH PORTER

For many of us parents, self-care is a special event, a massage, a mani/pedi or a day at the spa. Welcomed experiences for sure and definitely something we look forward to.

However, reducing self-care to events and experiences that happen occasionally or outside of our home runs the risk of the importance and priority being very low.

Think of it this way: What if the only time you ate a meal was on a holiday and away from home? Or the only time for meaningful conversations with friends and family occurred when in need? Well, this is how we treat self-care. Like a birthday or Mother's Day gift.

Using S.E.L.F. as our acronym, let's dive into what self-care can and should be on a daily basis.

Sleep

Far too many of us are normalizing lack of sleep. Sleep Foundation studies have shown that prolonged periods of little sleep (less than seven hours a night for adults) can contribute to a compromised immune system, hormonal abnormalities and mental health issues.

Remember the time you spent educating your soon-to-be college student about getting enough sleep? Suggesting they turn off their screens late at night, monitor their caffeine intake and not stay up into the wee hours trying to finish the assignment they procrastinated about?

Well, it's not that much different for us. The same rules apply if we want to improve our sleep habits.

One thing I've added to my nighttime routine is a brain dump. I keep a notepad and pen by my bed and, just before turning out the light, I take all of those lingering thoughts and dump them into this notebook (or occasionally a voice memo on my phone). This provides a place for all of the to-do lists, that otherwise swim around in my head at night, to live.

Exercise

The prospect of exercise may not be the thing that brings a smile to your face each day. Most of us know the benefits of exercise and really do mean to do it more regularly. The issue is that life gets in the way.

So how do we add this necessary component of a healthy lifestyle to our days? In bite-sized pieces if need be.

Finding an hour or two to work out may not be realistic, but what about a 15-minute walk before coffee (okay, after coffee)? How about a 15-second plank every morning, increasing the duration by five seconds each day until we arrive at a 60-second plank?

Start somewhere. The important thing – start.

Love

Freely giving and expressing love feels good, for the giver and the receiver. What about when you are both? How do you express self-love? In other words, how do you talk to yourself about yourself?

One way to show love to yourself is through positive affirmations. Speak to yourself about yourself the way you would speak about your best friend.

Fun/Fuel/Feelings

Settling on just one practice for “F” was challenging. Let's look at each of these because they are each valuable in their own way.

Starting with **FUN**, the question is simple. When was the last time you had a cheek-hurting, bellyaching laugh that brought you to tears? The type of laughter you remember from childhood?

Psychologist Nicole Beurkens, Ph.D., CNS says, "Play, although it may look different for adults, gives the mind freedom to explore and work through uncomfortable feelings and experiences and can also serve as a beneficial distraction."

When we slow down and are more mindful, we reduce stress. Beurkens suggests “taking in the things that bring us joy in the smallest of ways throughout our day.” Busy adults often see fun as a time robber. It is not.

The second “F” is for **FUEL**. How are you fueling and feeding your body? I love pizza and chocolate, probably more than most. However, at this stage in life, the diet of a college student will not serve me well. With that in mind, proper supplements and trading fries for a salad is my normal practice.

Last but not least, how are we processing our **FEELINGS**? Many of us suppress our feelings, and as a result we often eat them or maybe even drink them instead of actually feeling them.

So allow yourself to feel what you're experiencing. It's okay to be angry, sad or even mad. Remember, we can't go around, over or under our feelings. We must go through them and feel them to move on.

As our schedules get busy again and our calendars start to fill in, sometimes the goal is to just get through the day. Take a few minutes, two or three times a day, and check in with yourself. How you're feeling, how you're processing, what your stressors are.

Perhaps there's a difficult conversation you have to have with someone that you've been avoiding. Think through what you're feeling and give words to it. Skipping that step may make a difficult conversation much worse than it needs to be.

Here's what I know for sure – we have an opportunity to reset and do things differently in 2021.

Choose to make yourself a priority this year and beyond. If that means writing time for yourself on your own calendar, then do it. Be sure to use ink, not pencil! If getting to bed at a decent hour means dishes are left in the sink, it really is okay. Self-care isn't selfish; it's required.



BY IANNI LE

Staying Healthy and Coping With **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Teach them what types of medicine they should keep on hand.

Your student needs a properly stocked medicine cabinet. The last thing anyone wants to do when they're sick is trek to the store. Here's what I like to keep in mine (after years of trial and error):

- * **Tums or Pepto-Bismol.** For those times when food just doesn't sit right or their stomachs are feeling queasy.
- * **Tylenol or Advil.** Any preferred kind of pain and fever relief is super helpful to keep on hand.
- * **A thermometer** to check for fevers.
- * **DayQuil and NyQuil,** if you use these products (or a generic or homeopathic equivalent). This duo is a student staple as colds travel so quickly through the dorms.
- * **Cough drops and Band-aids** are items you really want to have at the ready.
- * **Allergy medication.** If your student has allergies, be sure they have an adequate supply of medication for it and that they understand how and when to take it.

- * **A first aid kit.** Make sure they have Neosporin or an equivalent to clean the wound and sufficient bandages for whatever might happen. [CollegiateParent MarketPlace](#) has a handy kit you can get off Amazon that includes a little of everything!

- * **Immunity boosters.** This one is more of a personal preference, but I appreciate having Emergen-C packets or Vitamin C available when I notice people around me starting to get sick. You may have your own homeopathic approach to preventive wellness that you can share with your student.

You can also help them stock up on a few of their favorite shelf-stable sick foods from childhood. Maybe it's a can or two of chicken noodle soup, or tea and honey. My mom stuffed my suitcase with packets of the ginger tea she fed me when my stomach was upset growing up (which was a lot of the time). The nostalgia on its own did wonders in helping me feel better.



Getting your student ready for their first year of college is no small task. There's so much to teach them as they head into this exciting chapter of their lives!

I made quite a few blunders my freshman year, including forgetting to buy medicine until I was slightly delirious from the flu and almost passed out at Target, as well as having generally no idea how to handle important medical decisions.

Here are some important conversations to have with your student during move-in, throughout the semester, or when they're home for break. These are things they'll always need to know.

Make sure they know how and when to access health services, especially during an emergency!

Your college student might find themselves in an emergency situation and it's important that they know what their options are and where to go for help. When I was in college, there were quite a few times when, unexpectedly, one of my friends experienced a medical emergency and I was at a complete loss as to what to do. There were also several instances when I myself probably needed medical attention but didn't know it, and none of my friends knew to suggest it. You'd be surprised at what college students will brush off as "no big deal"!

Once a friend fainted during breakfast, which sent the rest of us into a panic. We didn't know if we should call an ambulance, which doctor we should take him to, and who we could even ask for help. We wound up taking him to the nearest emergency room just because it was close. In the end, he was simply extremely dehydrated and needed an I.V. drip. The ER bill, as you can imagine, was astronomical, though an ambulance ride would easily have cost thousands of dollars more.

From that episode we learned that, unless it's a true emergency, it's best to go to an urgent care center when you can't get in to see your primary care physician. I studied up on what urgent care centers treat and where the nearest one was so we could avoid going to the ER unnecessarily in the future.

If your student lives on campus with access to campus health services, they can and should go there in non-emergency situations. Campus health centers have seen a vast majority of the ailments and injuries your student is likely to encounter in college, and are well equipped to help.

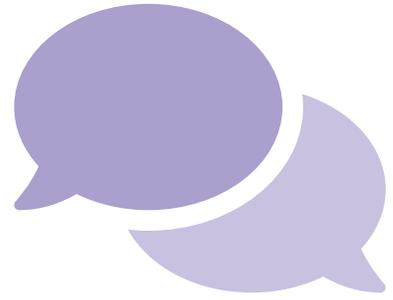
Has your student ever encountered someone with severe allergic reactions? Anaphylaxis can be scary the first time you see it. It's important that your student know how to remain calm and find help if needed. If your student is the one with severe allergies, they need to know what their best course of action is depending on the situation.

It will be beneficial to sit down with your student and review the healthcare options near their university. Make sure they can locate the nearest emergency room and urgent care center if and when they need it. They should also be familiar with the services provided by the campus health center and when that's a good choice for treatment.

While all of these details may seem excessive, I guarantee that when your student finds themselves in a pinch, they'll be grateful you helped them prepare to take care of themselves and potentially their friends. Check out [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com) for a comprehensive list of things to talk over with your student to ensure they stay well and safe this school year!

Social Skills

All Students Need



BY ANNE MAYTUBBY

Between being thrown into a completely new pool of people my age to suddenly having to learn how to address professors and adults professionally, starting college was a time of social “firsts.”

One thing that I found most intimidating when I arrived at college was the immediate exposure to communicating with adults, and being treated as an adult in return. In high school, I was lucky to have teachers who already knew me because of my older siblings, and I felt like I never really had to “start fresh” with adults or other peers.

So, when I got to college and was faced with professors who had no previous opinion of me and my first impression mattered, there were a few things that I never thought to consider.

1. Having a Firm Handshake

This was something my dad always made me practice with him as I was growing up – I did as a joke, but now I’m so thankful that he emphasized to me how important it is to have a firm handshake! When I got to college, whether it was in a job interview or meeting professors one-on-one for the first time, having a strong and confident handshake can make all the difference in a first impression.

2. Making Eye Contact

Maintaining eye contact, whether in a meeting or just conversation with adults, is something I’ve found to be very meaningful. It can be intimidating, but in my opinion makes any conversation more memorable and impactful. Even when taking classes online, my professors have challenged us to look into the camera (and not look at ourselves or at notes) when we are presenting on Zoom. This was definitely challenging, but again, means a lot to professors (and can help improve a presentation grade)!

3. Having a Thoughtful Introduction About Yourself

When I was faced with my first professional interview during my freshman year of college, I really didn’t know what to expect. While feeling confident in interviews often comes with experience and practice, I found that a few tips helped me feel more prepared.

First, I made sure to have a solid introduction for myself. I found that if I could seamlessly answer questions about myself, like what brought me to the job, what my passions are, why I chose to go to my university, etc., this starts the interview off on the right foot and allows me to focus on the tougher questions that a prospective employer might have.



4. Sending Professional Emails

Whether it's emailing a professor with a simple homework question or emailing an employer after an interview, leaving a good impression on people can be just as important online as it is in person. Whenever I write an email to an adult, I make sure to address them professionally (e.g., Dr., Professor), use complete sentences, and thank them at the end of the email. This might seem simple and self-explanatory, but it can make all the difference in gaining the respect of adults around you!

5. Managing a Social Life

One of my favorite pieces of advice I received before starting college was to not be afraid to say yes, but also know when to say no. Especially when I first got there and was trying to meet as many people as possible,

saying yes was so important! It can be intimidating to accept an invite to something when you don't know many people, but this is an essential part of getting acclimated and finding "your people" in a new place.

While "saying yes" was one of the ways I met many of my best friends at school, it's also important to recognize that there needs to be a balance. Sometimes it's necessary to say no and pass on something with friends if that means getting to study more for an exam, or just taking some time for yourself. One of the best things about college is that there will always be something going on – this is exciting, but also recognize that if you have to miss one night with friends there will be hundreds more!

The social aspects of college are some of the best and most memorable, but balancing this with academics and mental health can be challenging. College is full of so many new experiences! I hope these tips help your student feel a little more confident in all their relationships and endeavors.

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Preparing for a Career:

The Importance of Internships in College

BY SUZANNE SHAFFER

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Many students start college unsure about what kind of career they want and the best path to get there. While coursework can help them figure this out, internships are also key. Students discover what they love through their classes, but there's nothing like real-world experience to clarify what they're looking for in a job.

Prospective employers value internship experience, and internships often lead to an offer for a full-time position. With all the competition for jobs after graduation, your student can't afford to ignore the importance of internships!

How do internships work and where do students find them?

The purpose of an internship is to provide a meaningful learning opportunity for the student. Internships may be paid or unpaid and the student may or may not receive academic credit for them. Sometimes an internship connects very directly with a student's college coursework.

The company or organization also benefits because they can supplement their workforce with students, some of whom will eventually become permanent hires. Though internships may require the student to perform what might seem like menial tasks, those tasks help the student gather information about the job and/or industry – and are a practical reminder that we all start out on the ground floor.

The campus career center is a primary source for locating internships; companies that love

to hire students from the school will actively recruit through job/career fairs and online listings. The career center can also help your student with internship-related tasks: resumes, cover letters and interview tips. Professors are another source for internship leads – just one more reason for your student to cultivate meaningful relationships with professors.

Handshake is an excellent website that specializes in helping college students find internships. Your student can also check online internship databases like Internships.com, WayUp.com and YouTern.com. Last but not least, encourage your student to get on LinkedIn and interact with their connections. (If they don't have a LinkedIn account yet, now's the time to create one!)

Internships offer these benefits:

- * The opportunity to “try on” a career before applying for and accepting a “real” job
- * A chance to identify areas where they may need to take additional classes related to their career interests before graduation
- * Higher starting salaries based on career-specific work experience

What I Learned From My Internships in College – Ianni Le

1. My internships taught me about myself, and what I need to thrive in a work environment.
2. They helped me mature into someone who was prepared to enter the workforce, confident in my ability to stay professional in different situations and engage with colleagues and bosses.
3. Internships also taught me how to ask for help in a professional setting and that it was okay to lean on my team members when I needed to.
4. Internships prepared me for the job search. I took away real-life skills and built new perspectives on my field of study and my personal creativity which helped me become a competitive candidate for full-time jobs after graduation.
5. Internships allowed me to build my network, making it easy to turn to different people for advice further down the line.
6. Internships are fantastic practice for future job interviews!

How can parents help?

Your role is to serve as an advisor, offering guidance but allowing your student to take the lead. It's appropriate to discuss their career and professional goals and proofread resumes and cover letters.

Don't forget to think about your own personal connections. Maybe you know someone looking for an intern or working in your student's field of interest that you can connect them with. Your student will appreciate the introduction even if you're just helping them build their network.

You can also be a cheerleader when (not if) your student encounters disappointment while applying for internships. They may need to apply for 10 or 12 before landing one.

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Kanken Classic Backpack
\$79.95 | Amazon
Your student will love this lightweight backpack, perfect for stashing their everyday essentials.

Shower Caddy
\$8.99 | Amazon
If your student is sharing a community bathroom, they will need a shower caddy. This quick dry mesh material is an affordable and functional option to keep toiletries organized.

Book for College Parents
\$23.00 | Amazon
Students face pressures from various directions as they navigate college. This guide covers a multitude of topics to help parents support their students.

Keep an *Eye* on the Budget

One of the biggest challenges outside the classroom for students adjusting to college life is learning to manage money.

Date	Item	Amount
11-26	Groceries	107.36
11-26	Gas	51.20
-01	Eating out	45.60
	Tip	5.00
	haircut	25.00
		320.00

They're suddenly responsible for paying for all sorts of things on their own, from textbooks and groceries to laundry (you hope) and maybe an occasional haircut. With the convenience of buying and ordering stuff with a smartphone or debit card, it can be easy to let little purchases add up to a financial headache.

The parent's role? Help your student make a budget and keep an eye on the money going in and out of their bank account. Printable budget worksheets are easy to find online, including on your bank's website, and there are many good smartphone budgeting apps, too – [Mint](#) is a favorite.

The Fall Term Spending Money Budget

If you didn't do this before the start of the school year, take time now to make a list with your student of their likely flexible/recreational expenses (everything besides tuition, room, board and student fees – although if they'll contribute to these, put them in the budget as well).

Flexible expenses can include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| \$ Textbooks | \$ Food/drink outside of the meal plan |
| \$ Clothing | \$ Entertainment |
| \$ Electronics and school supplies | \$ Local travel (bus pass, Uber trips) |
| \$ Toiletries and other personal items | \$ Recreational travel and trips home |
| \$ Dorm furnishings | \$ Sorority/fraternity or club dues |
| \$ Laundry money | |

Next, estimate how much each item will be and agree on who's paying for what, taking your student's income into consideration. Their income will come from their savings, any earnings from a campus job (if they will work), and possibly an allowance from you. Make it a goal for your student to maintain a certain level of savings.

Be sure to discuss how peer pressure can cause students to overspend. Your student may need to say no sometimes to an activity or purchase that a roommate or friend doesn't think twice about. On this subject, be clear up front about what will happen if your student doesn't stay within their budget (in case they assume you'll automatically bail them out).

Fall term will involve some experimentation. Your student may find it easy to stay within their budget or end up running short each month. Over winter break, you can look back together at the experience and help them revise their budget for spring term based on what they learned.

Perks of Campus Employment

A great way to balance income and spending is to get a campus job. In general, students who work part-time during the school year get better grades than those who don't, probably because they need to be more focused, organized and conscientious about budgeting time for study.

Finding a job in the local community is always an option, but on-campus positions have special advantages. The hours are usually flexible, and supervisors will accommodate your student's schedule. Student employees meet more of their fellow students as well as more faculty members, administrators and staff – a great network for career mentorship, professional references and all-around support.

If federal work study is part of your student's financial aid package, they can research and apply for available work-study positions, but there are usually plenty of campus jobs to go around for any student who wants one. Departments that hire students may include the admissions and alumni offices, recreation center, library, dining facilities, bookstore, museums and art galleries, language and computer labs, and performance spaces.

Banking By Smartphone

Many students still choose to open an account at a bank with a branch near campus. But these days, if you'd like to send money to your student, or your student needs to split a restaurant bill with friends or even pay school expenses, it can all happen without writing a check or visiting an ATM.

Google Pay lets you pay for goods and services both online and in brick-and-mortar stores. With Google Pay Send, you can pay anyone with an email address or phone number. **Venmo**, a service of PayPal, is a simple and free way to pay friends and family or shop online. You can link your bank account or debit card quickly and also track finances with the app. No matter where you bank, you can use **Zelle** to send money in minutes from your account to another U.S. bank account via an email address or mobile phone number.

Your student may already be using one of these apps! Visit the websites to learn more about the apps and their security features, or ask your trusted local bank which they recommend.

Housing

Timeline

Your student is all moved in so housing is off your to-do list for a while, right? Wrong! Housing season starts earlier than you might think. If you don't want your student scrambling at the last minute or discovering that all the desirable housing (and roommates) are taken, share this timeline and check in periodically about their progress.

Right Now

Look at the university's housing website to find out when applications are due for returning students. Even if your student doesn't plan to live on campus, this is a good end date for having a plan in place. **On-campus housing applications are due** _____.

Have your student ask an upperclassman when apartments start to fill up (try their RA or a Teaching Assistant from one of their classes). This varies by area, so the inside scoop is valuable. Don't be surprised if it is early! **Off-campus housing tends to fill up by** _____.

By Mid-Term

Now's the time to start talking to potential roommates if they haven't already. Your student should have a good idea what types of housing are available, and in some rental markets should already have started looking for a place.

Thanksgiving Break

If your student wants to live on campus: Encourage them to check out the different residence halls and on-campus apartments.

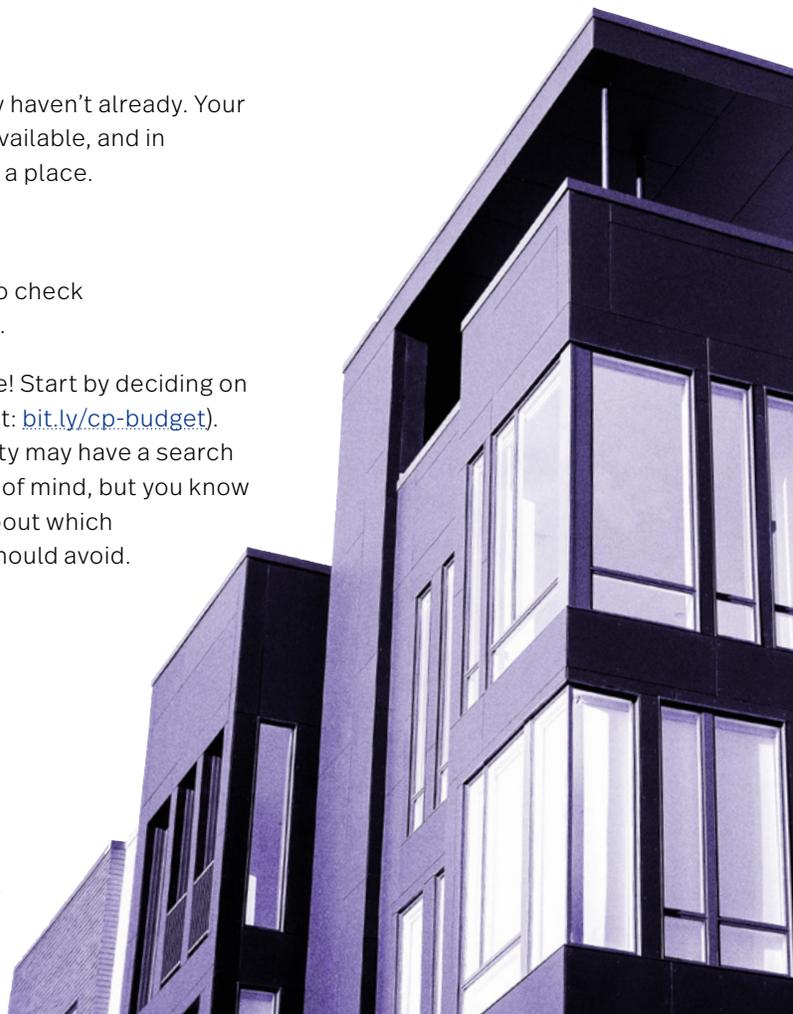
If your student wants to live off campus: Rental search time! Start by deciding on a budget for next year's housing (we have a helpful worksheet: bit.ly/cp-budget). Browse apartment websites with your student (their university may have a search portal) and point out the features that they may not have top of mind, but you know are important. They can also be talking to upperclassmen about which neighborhoods and buildings are desirable and which they should avoid.

Winter Break

Your student should know where they want to live, and in some areas should be ready to sign a lease (review the lease with them). Check out our glossary of lease terms and our property-viewing checklist (bit.ly/property-viewing).

Spring

It's time to complete the housing process with the university or sign a lease. Encourage your student to make a plan for moving and/or storing their belongings.





Meet Our Writers

Amy Baldwin, Ed.D., the former Director of Student Transitions at the University of Central Arkansas, currently teaches student success and literacy to first-year students. She is co-author of a number of books, including *A High School Parent's Guide to College Success: 12 Essentials and The College Experience*. Amy and her husband are parents of a college student and a recent college graduate. She also blogs at higherparent.com.

Shari Bender works in marketing and communications and is a writer and Facebook Community Manager for CollegiateParent. With two grown children, Shari is happily if sentimentally embracing her empty nest along with her husband of nearly 30 years.

Rob Danzman, MS, NCC, LCMHC is a licensed clinical mental health counselor and the author of *The Insider's Guide to Parenting*. Rob holds a BA in Outdoor Leadership and a MS in Community Counseling with a focus on teen and college student anxiety, depression, substance use and motivation issues. Find more of his expert advice at motivatecounseling.com.

Kate Gallop is a junior at Washington University in St. Louis where she majors in English and minors in psychology and WGSS (women, gender and sexuality studies). Aside from writing, Kate enjoys creating graphics for WashU Dance Marathon and playing club basketball.

Adina Glickman is the founder of Affinity Coaching (affinitycoachinggroup.com) and the Academic Resilience Consortium and the former director of learning strategies at Stanford University. She writes the "Dear Adina" advice column for CollegiateParent. Visit collegiateparent.com/dear-adina.

Ianni Le is a freelance writer who attended the University of Colorado at Boulder, graduating with a degree in Media Design and English Literature. She grew up in Shanghai, China and enjoys her dogs, books and food equally.

Anne Maytubby is a senior at the University of San Diego where she's majoring in Environmental Science. Outside of studies, Anne loves to travel, hike, attend concerts and spend time with close friends (and her dog Max).

Cambria Pilger is a recent graduate of Whitworth University where she studied journalism and mass media communication, with minors in Spanish and business. Cambria is a freelance writer and a Communications and Development Admin at a local ministry.

Deborah Porter is a Home/Life Balance Coach and a regular contributor to *Virginia This Morning* on WTVR. She and her husband have three adult children, all college graduates. Visit deborahporter.net and download her free ebook, "7 Habits of Confident Moms," at bit.ly/confidentmomebook.

LaTrina Rogers, M.S.Ed., is Director of Residential Life at Ranken Technical College in St. Louis, MO. Connect with LaTrina @thedormmom on Instagram and Twitter and "The Dorm Mom" on Facebook and WordPress.

Suzanne Shaffer counsels students and families through her blog, Parenting for College (parentingforcollege.com), and writes regularly for CollegiateParent. Her advice has also been featured in print and online on Huffington Post, Yahoo Finance, U.S. News College, TeenLife, Smart College Visit, Road2College and more.

Jennifer Sullivan, M.S., is a private executive functioning coach for high school and college students and the founder of Fast Forward College Coaching (fastforwardcollegecoaching.com). Find more of her expert advice in her book *Sharing the Transition to College: Words of Advice for Diverse Learners and Their Families*.

Kesha Williams is Director of Parent and Family Programs at Johns Hopkins University where she supports student success by serving as a link between families and the school. Kesha's advice is featured in a new book, *College Ready: Expert Advice for Parents to Simplify the College Transition*.

"I feel a kinship with the writers and have received lots of hope, encouragement and good information from their articles. The Loop is a must-read for every college parent."



"For everything that's been easier on me as a mom because this baby isn't my first, sending her to college is harder because she's my last."

- Parent Blog



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