
51 TIPS FOR PARENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Introduction

The college years will be among the most formative and challenging years of your son or daughter's life. College offers many opportunities for personal, intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth. It is a period of self-discovery, and a time for taking charge of one's life.

This is a time of change, not only for your student, but also for you. There will be changes in how you communicate, influence, and interact with your son or daughter.

You will, however, continue to play an important role in your student's life.

This book provides numerous tips, hints, and recommendations on how you can help your student have a successful college experience. With you as a mentor and coach, your son or daughter will achieve success in college and beyond.

Preview

*“There are two great things that you
can give your children:
one is roots, the other is wings.”*

Hodding Carter

TIP 1

EMBRACE YOUR NEW ROLE

Your son or daughter may be away at college, but the bond you have will remain as strong as ever.

During these next years, your role as a parent and the relationship with your son or daughter will change.

College students are expected to be self-sufficient and independent. They will nevertheless continue to need parental guidance and support.

You will remain the primary influence in your student's life, but at a greater distance. Although away at college, knowing that you are there for assistance and encouragement is extremely important.

As your role as a parent changes and your son or daughter develops and grows, the two of you will develop a new adult relationship based on mutual respect, shared interests, and the bonds of family.

TIP 2

DISCUSS COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

“I have two sons attending college. One texts me almost daily. The other prefers a weekly phone call. This works for us.”

MICHELLE, MOTHER OF A FRESHMAN AND A JUNIOR

What's the best way for you to keep in touch?

Texts...email...phone or video calls? You may settle on a regularly scheduled day and time, or together decide to be more spontaneous.

Daily contact may send the message that you don't trust your son or daughter to live independently—or that you are unwilling to let go. Similarly, if your student initiates daily contact, he/she may be experiencing college adjustment issues.

Regardless of when or how you communicate, it's important to keep the lines of communication open.

Students are always in the middle of something, so when you call, you might start off by asking, "Is this a good time to talk?"

TIP 3

ESTABLISH FINANCIAL GROUND RULES

“You don’t need a lot of money in college to have a great time—you just need to budget your money and be smart.”

MARIA, JUNIOR ENGINEERING MAJOR

Discuss finances with your student and clarify who pays for what.

Encourage your son or daughter to be financially responsible, and recommend that he/she do the following:

- ▶ Establish a weekly budget and stick to it.
- ▶ To avoid incurring debt and running up charges, use a debit and school cash card rather than a credit card.
- ▶ Save money on entertainment by taking advantage of free or inexpensive campus events.
- ▶ Buy used textbooks online, from other students, or at the college bookstore.
- ▶ Get a checking account that doesn't incur out of network ATM fees.
- ▶ Take full advantage of the school's meal plan, and avoid overspending on extra meals and snacks.

TIP 4

TEACH YOUR STUDENT THE BASICS

“My roommate had never done his own laundry, and he put his new red T-shirt in with everything else. He now has a lot of pink clothes.” SCOTT, FRESHMAN FINANCE MAJOR

Many students go off to college missing some basic life skills.

It should come as little surprise that many new college students lack some basic everyday skills—skills that most adults take for granted.

This may include sewing on a button, doing laundry, ironing clothes, tying a tie, maintaining a checking account, using a debit card, paying bills, and maintaining a budget.

Create a list of things to review with your student early in his/her college career.

TIP 5

SHARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

“If you want children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders.” ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

Parents should set reasonable and realistic expectations, and communicate those expectations to their student.

Expectations may involve maintaining good grades, regular class attendance, responsible spending, keeping in touch, contributing to college expenses, and not partying to excess.

Perfection is unattainable. But taking one's education seriously, working hard to fulfill one's potential, and balancing school and social life are quite reasonable expectations.

Clear communication of your expectations sets the stage for a positive parent-student relationship during the college years.

TIP 6

UNDERSTAND PARENTAL RIGHTS AND FERPA

“Sometimes parents have a hard time accepting that we can't provide them with their student's grades.” COLLEGE REGISTRAR

FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) protects the privacy of student education records.

FERPA provides parents with certain rights regarding their child's K-12 education records. Once a student reaches age 18 or enters college, however, the rights previously held by the parents transfer exclusively to the student.

Ordinarily, parents obtain information about their student's records directly from their son or daughter. Parents can obtain information from the college only if their student provides the college with written permission, or in connection with an emergency.

For more details visit www.ed.gov.

TIP 7

KEEP YOUR STUDENT'S BEDROOM INTACT

*“When I go home, it's great to sleep
in my old room, in my own bed.”*

SOPHIA, FRESHMAN UNDECLARED MAJOR

Admit it. You've contemplated converting your child's bedroom into an art studio or office.

But you may want to hold off on those renovations. Your student will return home for holidays, academic breaks, summers, and perhaps weekend “laundry runs.” Give the room a deep cleaning and maybe paint the walls, but leave your student’s “safe haven” intact for as long as possible.

If you permit a younger sibling to “upsize” into the newly vacated room, make your college student’s new room as much like the old one as possible.

TIP 8

AVOID HELICOPTER PARENTING

“It’s not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings.” ANN LANDERS

Helicopter parents are those who hover over their students.

College administrators began using the term “helicopter parent” when they noticed parents being overprotective and “hovering” over their students.

Helicopter parents have earned notoriety for such practices as:

- ▶ selecting their student's courses
- ▶ complaining to professors about their student's grades
- ▶ calling each morning to wake their student up for class

For parents who have been actively involved in their student's life, it can be very difficult to let go. If you're inclined toward over-involvement, ask yourself if what you are doing represents productive assistance, or if you are inadvertently fostering dependency, and preventing your son or daughter from becoming a self-sufficient, responsible adult.

TIP 9

ACTIVELY LISTEN

“Most of the successful people I’ve known are the ones who do more listening than talking.” BERNARD M. BARUCH

The single most helpful thing you can do when communicating with your student is to listen.

Listening demonstrates concern and respect for what's being said. It's judgment and advice free.

Active listening involves asking for clarification, reflecting content (by repeating or paraphrasing what you've heard) and reflecting feelings (by commenting on the emotions associated with the situation being discussed). Active listening takes the burden off you to solve every problem, or to "save the day" at the first sign of trouble.

Very often, students simply need to report on daily events, blow off steam, and "have the ear" of their most trusted confidantes—their parents.

TIP 10

LEARN ABOUT STUDENT SERVICES

*Campus services are voluntary,
so it's up to the individual student
to contact or visit them.*

Preview

TIP 11

UNDERSTAND THAT HOMESICKNESS IS NORMAL

During the move-in, help decorate your student's dorm room to give it a more homey, non-institutional feel.

Most college students report experiencing homesickness, especially during their first year.

Living in a new and unfamiliar environment can feel overwhelming at times, and it's only natural to long for the familiarity and comforts of home. For most students, homesickness is mild and short-lived.

If your student reports being homesick, it's important that you do not overreact. And remember that the cure for homesickness cannot be found at home. Instead, students need to meet new people, participate in activities, and gain a sense of "community" at college.

Should your son or daughter experience prolonged or severe depression or anxiety, a visit to the Counseling Center may be in order.

Pep talks from you can go a long way in assuring your student that he/she has what it takes to thrive in college.

TIP 12

DISCUSS HEALTH INSURANCE

"I never knew anything about health insurance until my parents explained it to me. It was kind of a revelation."

WYATT, JUNIOR BIOLOGY MAJOR

Health insurance is generally of little interest to new college students.

All colleges offer an affordable student health insurance plan through an outside insurance provider. Some parents, however, prefer to continue their student's coverage through their family's plan. Carefully review both plans to determine the best coverage for your student.

Explain your student's health insurance coverage to him/her, go over the concept of "co-pay," and discuss the fact that a co-payment may be needed in order to get lab work completed or a prescription filled.

Remind your student to always have a current insurance card in his/her wallet.

TIP 13

RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT ON YOUNGER SIBLINGS

Family Weekends provide a great opportunity for families to reconnect.

With all the excitement and commotion over college, don't lose sight of the potential impact on remaining siblings.

Every family dynamic is different. Younger siblings may feel pressure to meet or exceed their older sibling's success. They may be unaccustomed to being the new center of attention at home—or they may simply miss their big brother or sister. Talk to them about their feelings.

Check your own behavior to determine if you are applying undue pressure, attention, or control on remaining siblings, or if any feelings of loss you have are impacting the family.

Encourage your children to stay in touch with each other. Regular communication among siblings sends a clear message that they may be out of sight, but not out of mind.

TIP 14

PLAN COLLEGE VISITS FAR IN ADVANCE

“When my son was a freshman, we didn't realize how far ahead you have to make plans. We quickly learned our lesson.”

MICHAEL, FATHER OF A COLLEGE JUNIOR

Preview

TIP 15

RECOMMEND INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

“On a whim, I joined the Debate Team at the beginning of my sophomore year. It's been my most rewarding college experience.” BRAD, JUNIOR ENGLISH MAJOR

One of the most enjoyable aspects of college is involvement in student organizations.

There is no better way to meet students who share one's interests, develop important work-related skills, and have some fun.

Examples include:

- ▶ **Community Service** – Students serve the needs of the neighboring community
- ▶ **Honor Societies** – Scholarship and leadership are recognized and encouraged
- ▶ **Political** – Groups associated with a political party or social cause
- ▶ **Professional** – Pre-Dentistry, Pre-Law, Accounting Society, and more
- ▶ **Social** – Fraternities and sororities
- ▶ **Special Interest** – Clubs such as French Club, Campus Spirit, and Film Club
- ▶ **Sports and Recreation** – Soccer, softball, rugby, lacrosse, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.

TIP 16

ANTICIPATE ACADEMIC STRUGGLES

Encourage your student to enroll in a “College 101” or “Intro to College” course. These courses provide valuable information and lots of college success tips.

It's a rare college student who doesn't struggle in some classes.

College coursework should be demanding and challenging. An important component of navigating the college experience is learning how to manage time, set priorities, and cope with academic rigor.

Particularly challenging courses typically require extra time and effort, and may necessitate supplemental help (tutoring, study groups, extra help sessions).

Courses that require extra time or focus may be better taken during the summer, or during a semester with a lighter, less demanding course load.

Encourage your student to take full advantage of all the academic guidance and support available on campus.

TIP 17

PROVIDE UPDATES FROM HOME

“I love getting news from home about how my brother's doing—and about our dog's latest antics.” OLIVIA, FRESHMAN ART MAJOR

College students enjoy hearing about everyday events and activities back home.

Make it a point to provide updates on pretty much anything and everything going on regarding siblings, family members, pets, friends, home repairs, upcoming trips, and so forth.

With so many new things in their lives, it's reassuring for students to know that life goes on for everyone back home—and that they are still a vital member of the family.

TIP 18

TALK ABOUT DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

"Daily marijuana use has more than tripled in the past two decades among college students." NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DRUG ABUSE

The risks associated with binge drinking and drug use are too important to go unaddressed.

Because college students are old enough to leave home and live independently, some parents feel that their student will not heed their advice regarding alcohol and drug use. But research shows that 80% of students take their parent's rules and expectations about alcohol and drugs very seriously.

Engage your student in discussions on alcohol and drug use. Discuss the consequences of excessive drinking and of using illicit drugs, and make sure that your son or daughter knows where you stand on these issues.

For discussion tips, check your college's Counseling or Health & Wellness Center website, or search online for "talking to college students about alcohol."

TIP 19

UNLESS IT'S NECESSARY LEAVE THE CAR AT HOME

The alternative to having a car is to do what most college students do—walk, bike, skateboard, or use public transportation.

The consensus among college administrators is that first and second year students should not have a car on campus.

The reasons include:

- ▶ The cost – parking fees, insurance, gas, and upkeep
- ▶ Students with cars become the designated drivers, and the "car loaners" when friends need wheels for errands, road trips, etc.
- ▶ With a car comes the possibility of an accident or DUI.

If a compelling rationale exists for your student to have a car on campus during his/her junior or senior year, have a discussion at that time regarding responsible use, and how the costs fit into the student's budget.

TIP 20

ACCEPT THE INEVITABILITY OF ILLNESS

“When my daughter got the flu last year she found out that when you get sick at college, there’s no TLC.”

VICKI, MOTHER OF A COLLEGE SOPHOMORE

Just like everyone else, college students get sick.

When you receive the inevitable “I feel awful” call or text, take a deep breath rather than immediately booking a flight halfway across the state or country. No student wants their mom or dad camped out in their dorm room spooning them soup.

You know the drill for a common cold—rest, plenty of liquids, and over-the-counter medication. If the condition persists, or the symptoms are more severe, a trek over to the Health Center is strongly recommended.

And your student’s roommate or RA can bring some food (including a bowl of soup) from the nearest dining hall.

TIP 21

DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS

“I come to every Academic Advising appointment with a legal pad full of questions.” DEON, JUNIOR PHYSICS MAJOR

Academic Advisors help students with their academic plans and decisions.

In high school, your student was assigned a school counselor for assistance with course selection and college preparation. In college, it is the Academic Advisor (or Counselor) who provides guidance regarding course selection and academic planning.

Most colleges have Advisors who work with “undeclared” students, and Departmental Advisors for students with declared majors. Students should schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor several months prior to each semester’s class registration period.

Academic offerings and requirements change constantly and can be confusing, so it is essential that your student meet regularly with his/her Academic Advisor.

TIP 22

VISIT THE CAMPUS IN MODERATION

The first two weekends are packed with orientation activities. Parents should avoid campus visits on those weekends.

Students typically look forward to the occasional family visit—the operative word being “occasional.”

Students also look forward to their weekends—to socialize, catch up on sleep or schoolwork, study for upcoming exams, do laundry, work out, attend campus or community events, or to simply “chill.”

Family visits can be great fun, but they can also be somewhat disruptive. Review your respective schedules early each semester, and plan a mutually convenient campus visit schedule.

Spontaneous, unannounced parent “drop-ins” are never a good idea.

TIP 23

PROVIDE RELEVANT INFORMATION

“My son wanted an aquarium until I sent him a link to the Housing Regulations that said aquariums are forbidden in dorm rooms.” ROBERT, FATHER OF A FRESHMAN

It's understandable that many incoming college students experience “information overload.”

New students are dealing with the onset of dorm living, classes, studying, relationships, campus activities, etc. Given everything they are dealing with, few students thoroughly review the Rules and Regulations, Program Descriptions, Student Code of Conduct, and list of Student Organizations. Fortunately, it's all available online to parents.

Since no one knows your student's interests, aspirations, and concerns as well as you, you're in a perfect position to use the information you've acquired from your campus visits and the college's website to provide timely guidance and information. For example, does your student enjoy chess or have a flare for the dramatic? If so, recommend participation in the Chess Club, or the Theatre Council.

TIP 24

FILL THE EMPTY NEST

“I knew I’d miss my daughter, but I guess I didn’t realize just how much. But over time I filled the void with other activities.”

GIOVANNA, MOTHER OF A JUNIOR

It's very common for parents to experience mixed emotions when their child leaves for college.

When your son or daughter goes off to college, you're undoubtedly happy, proud, and excited. But you may also experience feelings of loss—both the loss of a child at home, and perhaps a loss of “purpose” in your own life. These are all normal reactions.

Empty Nest parents face new challenges, such as reconnecting with one another, finding new ways to occupy their free time, and establishing a new kind of relationship with their children—those in college and those still at home.

Make the effort to understand and discuss these new feelings and realities. And strive to do exactly what your college student would want you to do—enjoy your life to the fullest.

TIP 25

UNDERSTAND HOW THE COLLEGE IS ORGANIZED

*Don't go hunting for printed college catalogs.
They no longer exist—everything's online.*

Colleges are typically divided into three divisions: Academic, Business, and Student Affairs.

Academic Affairs is comprised of academic departments such as Arts & Sciences, Business, Engineering, and Health Sciences. Staffed by faculty, administrators and support personnel, each department offers numerous academic major and minor programs.

Business Affairs oversees the college's operations, funding, technology, and physical infrastructure.

Student Affairs is comprised of departments that provide services such as Residence Life, Recreation & Wellness, Counseling & Disability Services, Career Services, Health Center, and more. The office of the Vice President of Student Affairs is a good starting place for questions or concerns.

TIP 26

THINK BEFORE BLAMING THE ROOMMATE

Some roommate conflicts require outside assistance. Students may want to involve their Resident Assistant for unbiased advice.

Living in a confined space in a new environment presents unique challenges.

The easiest thing for you or your student to do when dorm room problems arise is to place the blame squarely on the most convenient culprit, the roommate.

Remember that relationships are a two-way street, and solutions to problems are often just a conversation away. Encourage your student to identify compromises and solutions, and to talk them over with his/her roommate.

Although switching roommates at year's end may be advisable, remind your student that he/she will encounter a lifetime of relationships requiring communication and compromise.

TIP 27

KEEP UP ON COLLEGE EVENTS

*“The good life is one inspired by love and
guided by knowledge.”* BERTRAND RUSSELL

Technology makes it easy to keep up on college happenings.

“Back in the day” parents were pretty much in the dark about what went on at their student’s college. That’s no longer the case.

To stay up-to-date on what's happening, take time to do the following:

- ▶ view the online campus events calendar
- ▶ check out social networking pages
- ▶ read the online version of the student newspaper
- ▶ review the various departmental websites
- ▶ participate in alumni or parent groups

Your intention should not be to infringe upon or interfere with your student’s daily life. But a healthy curiosity about campus and departmental goings-on allows you to share ideas and opportunities with your son or daughter.

TIP 28

UNDERSTAND THAT CAREER INDECISION IS NORMAL

“My daughter knew at age 15 she wanted to be a nurse, whereas my son changed majors three times before deciding on accounting.”

JOHN, FATHER OF TWO COLLEGE GRADUATES

Most 18-20 year olds have a limited knowledge of the world of work.

First and second year college students may be somewhat familiar with a few dozen of the more common or “visible” careers (e.g., teacher, doctor, lawyer, professional athlete, journalist, hip hop artist), but most are unaware of their many career options.

Being “undecided” or “undeclared” is often preferable to making career decisions based on insufficient or inaccurate information. In fact, many students make premature decisions as a way to alleviate the anxiety or stigma associated with being undecided.

The solution? Encourage your student to schedule an appointment at Career Services. Career Counselors help students identify academic majors and careers consistent with their interests, skills, and values.

TIP 29

RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF RESIDENT ASSISTANTS

"I've enjoyed talking to my RA and hearing stories about his first year in college."

VISHAL, FRESHMAN UNDECLARED MAJOR

Resident Assistants (RAs) are full-time, upper-level students who live and work among dorm residents.

An RA's job is to enforce the rules, organize events, and generally ensure that everything operates smoothly on their floor. They typically receive room and board in exchange for their considerable efforts and long hours.

RAs are hard working students who know how to multi-task, manage their time, and get good grades. They are successful, veteran students who know the ropes on campus.

Your student's RA is a valuable resource who can provide support and guidance whenever questions or problems arise.

TIP 30

ENCOURAGE USE OF STUDENT DISCOUNTS

“We’re always surprised at how many stores give my daughter a student discount when she asks.” JESSICA, MOTHER OF A COLLEGE JUNIOR

You may not qualify for “senior discounts” yet, but your son or daughter is definitely eligible for student discounts.

This applies to both online and “brick and mortar” purchases of educational materials, electronics, clothing, and miscellaneous merchandise. Many restaurants, theaters, entertainment venues, and travel agencies offer student discounts as well.

With online and paper coupons, and online discount sites such as Groupon and Living-Social, you and your student can save money on small and large purchases alike.

TIP 31

CLARIFY HOUSE RULES DURING HOME VISITS

Treat returning students like children and they'll avoid home. Let them run roughshod over the household and you won't want them at home.

Visits home may present unique challenges.

College students have grown accustomed to considerable freedom and autonomy. When your student comes home for a visit, discuss house rules and expectations regarding curfews, chores, visitors, and borrowing vehicles.

Students generally come home for short visits to reconnect with family and friends, to “recharge their batteries,” and maybe for some home cooking (and laundry).

As much as they love and appreciate you, just like during high school, you may find that your son or daughter is more interested in spending time with friends than hanging out with you—or perhaps in just catching up on some sleep.

TIP 32

RECOMMEND EXTRA HELP WHEN NEEDED

*“You are never strong enough that
you don’t need help.”* CESAR CHAVEZ

Students who are struggling in a course have several options for extra help.

- ▶ The professor or TA (Teaching Assistant) may offer extra help sessions.
- ▶ Your student or a classmate can organize a Study Group.
- ▶ Some colleges provide Learning Centers and/or Tutorial Services.
- ▶ Your son or daughter can check with the appropriate academic department regarding the availability of paid tutors (often upper-class or graduate students).

The key is to seek assistance in a class before falling too far behind.

TIP 33

BE WARY OF CREDIT CARDS

“You can charge almost anything on our college card, but just like with credit cards, it's easy to forget that you're spending real money.” DAVID, SENIOR ACCOUNTING MAJOR

Most students use a debit card instead of a credit card.

Unlike a debit card, a credit card invites overspending, interest charges, late and missed payment fees, and debt.

The only advantage to credit card use for college students is the opportunity to build a strong credit score, which can be valuable for post-graduation apartment hunting and loan applications.

During your student's junior or senior year, consider opening a joint credit card account with a low spending limit—but only if your student is committed to spending within a strict budget.

TIP 34

SEND CARE PACKAGES

CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe) started sending food relief to Europe in 1945. Care Packages have been popular ever since.

There's something very special about receiving a Care Package from home.

Think about putting together a package that's full of goodies you know your student will appreciate. Perhaps your "world famous homemade brownies," your son's favorite beef jerky, or artwork done by a younger sibling. Maybe toss in a \$10 Starbucks or Amazon gift card.

The same applies to the occasional hand-written postcard or humorous greeting card. Such gestures, which take more thought and effort than a text, will definitely make your son or daughter's day.

TIP 35

SCHEDULE HOMETOWN APPOINTMENTS

If your student is prescribed any new medications at college, let your hometown physician know.

Schedule medical appointments during breaks and vacations.

Students typically continue to use their hometown health professionals for routine, non-emergency visits. For this reason, you would be wise to schedule physicals, dental cleanings, and eye exams for when your son or daughter is home for academic breaks and summer vacation.

Be sure to schedule these appointments well in advance.

TIP 36

DISCUSS SEXUAL ASSAULT

Your student should program his/her cell phone with the Campus Security number and two ICE numbers – people to contact In Case of Emergency.

Despite all reasonable efforts to maintain a safe environment, sexual assault occurs on college campuses.

Although both males and females can be victims and perpetrators, the majority of sexual violence on campus involves college men assaulting college women. And alcohol is typically involved.

Students can reduce their chances of being victimized by exercising common sense—staying among groups of friends at parties, avoiding open drink containers, and not letting their judgment be affected by drinking or using drugs.

Whether you're the parent of a daughter or son, express your concern and remind your student that alcohol impairs judgment, “No means no,” and individuals cannot legally consent to sexual activity when intoxicated.

TIP 37

BEWARE OF PROVIDING MISINFORMATION

“Knowledge is power. Information is liberating.” KOFI ANNAN

Some well-meaning parents give their students obsolete or inaccurate information.

In their zeal to help their students, some parents end up providing incorrect information on academic and career-related topics.

These parents are often relying on outdated information derived from their own college experience decades earlier, dubious internet sites, or well-meaning (but misinformed) friends.

Some parents also base their opinions on single incidents (e.g., “Marsha’s daughter was a Sociology major and now she’s working at a coffee shop”) or gross generalizations (e.g., “All business majors get high paying jobs”).

Parents who wish to provide guidance are advised to thoroughly check out their facts, and to encourage their student to discuss all academic and career decisions with their Academic Advisor and Career Counselor.

TIP 38

ENCOURAGE VISITING CAREER SERVICES

"I was clueless before I met with a Career Counselor. Now I have some direction and a much better idea of what I want to do."

MINH, JUNIOR PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

The Career Center can help your student plan and prepare for a rewarding career.

The Career Center provides assistance with the following:

- ▶ **Career Decision Making:** Discussions and assessment tools help students examine their values, interests, and abilities.
- ▶ **Career Exploration:** Information is available on any career of interest.
- ▶ **Internship & Job Search:** Workshops and one-on-one sessions are provided on writing resumes and cover letters, networking, professional etiquette, and interview preparation.
- ▶ **On-Campus Recruiting:** Job Fairs, Internship Fairs, and online job listings help students find employment.

Every student should meet with a Career Counselor to create a Career Action Plan.

TIP 39

ADDRESS EXTRA EXPENSES

Important life lessons are learned when costs are calculated and budgets are planned.

The college activities your student is interested in may cost extra money.

For example, joining a fraternity/sorority or studying abroad can be expensive. And then there's living off-campus, and the potential future expense of graduate or professional school.

Unless you are in a position to simply write a check for every additional expense, you need to “run the numbers” with your student to determine the additional costs and the source of the funding.

An extra program or activity may require that your student cut back on discretionary spending, or work during the summers to contribute his/her fair share.

TIP 40

DISCUSS THE VALUE OF INTERNSHIPS

“My internship made me realize I’d chosen the right major. I love college, but now I’m also looking forward to life after college.”

LAUREN, SENIOR MEDIA STUDIES MAJOR

Internships give students an opportunity to obtain relevant work experience prior to graduation.

Internships are a great way for students to get an inside glimpse of an occupation, company, and industry. They help students determine if the career they are considering is right for them—and since many companies use internship programs to screen prospective full-time hires, internships often turn into job offers.

Students typically complete internships during the summers following their sophomore and junior years. A lesser number of internships are available during the school year.

Career Services can help your student identify internship opportunities, and polish his/her resume and interview skills.

TIP 41

ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENT TO TALK IT OUT

“My son calls when he feels overwhelmed. He talks, I listen and sympathize. He invariably feels better after talking things out.”

CHERI, MOTHER OF A COLLEGE SOPHOMORE

If your student seems stressed out, encourage him/her to talk about it.

In addition to talking to you, your son or daughter should also consider talking to the appropriate college personnel.

- ▶ Students concerned about a class should meet with their professor.
- ▶ If there's a dorm problem, students may need to hash it out with the roommate, or talk it over with their RA.
- ▶ Students who seem overwhelmed with their classes should talk to their Academic Advisor about modifying their course load.
- ▶ Students in need of support or guidance should consider a visit to the Counseling Center.

The point is—students shouldn't feel the need to "go it alone."

TIP 42

VISIT THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

Explore all financial aid options, and keep student loans to a minimum.

There is a great deal of financial aid available, but you need to apply for it.

While most students are aware of the cost of their education, the parents are usually the ones responsible for paying the bill.

If your family needs assistance paying for college, the Financial Aid Office is the place to go for information on the type and amount of aid for which your student may be eligible.

If your student applied for Financial Aid and your family's circumstances change midyear (parent loses a job, parents divorce, etc.), contact the Financial Aid Office and request a re-evaluation.

If you need help with college costs, be sure to complete a new FAFSA each year.

TIP 43

ENCOURAGE EARLY APPLICATIONS

*“Never leave til tomorrow that which
you can do today.”* BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

A common practice among successful students is submitting applications as early as possible.

When spots are limited or acceptance is done on a “rolling basis,” the nod often goes to the early applicant.

This includes submitting applications for dorm room assignments, scholarships, course registration, study abroad programs, on-campus jobs, internships, volunteer opportunities, and summer jobs.

Because college students tend to be very busy and preoccupied, the occasional “friendly reminder” from you about the need to complete application materials in a timely fashion can be particularly helpful.

TIP 44

ANTICIPATE CHANGE IN YOUR STUDENT

“A parent’s challenge in setting realistic expectations is not to look for the person their student was before he or she left but at the person he or she is becoming.” KELCI LYNN LUCIER

Don't be surprised if you see changes in your student's attitudes, interests, or belief systems.

The same applies to your student's attire, grooming, and speech. Just think back to the changes that occurred during your child's toddler, elementary school, preteen, and teen years.

Change is a normal developmental process that can be temporary or permanent, subtle or extreme. While change is to be expected, if you see changes that concern you, be sure to discuss these concerns with your son or daughter.

Most importantly, keep an open mind and embrace your student's progression into young adulthood.

TIP 45

DISCUSS WORKING WHILE IN COLLEGE

Whenever possible, a student's part-time job should be related to his/her chosen career field.

It is seldom a good idea for first year students to work at a paid job, unless they absolutely need the money.

Once acclimated to college, your student might want to secure an on- or off-campus part-time job—but this should never be at the expense of doing well in his/her classes.

The advantage of on-campus employment is convenience. Hours are flexible and work is nearby. Some students qualify for a work-study position based on their family's income level.

Off-campus jobs may pay better, but transportation may be a hassle, and the hours are likely to be less flexible.

Working while in college provides students with an income, and future employers look favorably upon college graduates with work experience.

TIP 46

REVIEW COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

“My math class was too hard for me, but when I went to drop it, I found out that I was too late. I was stuck.”

TJ, SOPHOMORE BOTANY MAJOR

There may be times when a student needs to drop (withdraw) or receive an “incomplete” from a particular course.

If your student needs to withdraw from a course, he/she should check with the professor and the appropriate academic department about course “W” and “I” policies, approvals, paperwork, and deadlines.

There are limits to the number of permitted “W’s” and “I’s,” and dropping hours may jeopardize financial aid and work-study eligibility. In addition, a large number of “W’s” and “I’s” may be viewed unfavorably by graduate/professional school admission committees.

TIP 47

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

*“Life can only be understood backwards;
but it must be lived forwards.”*

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

Sharing your life experiences with your student can be beneficial and illuminating.

This includes sharing the good and the bad—your accomplishments and setbacks, as well as the good and poor decisions you made in your late teens and early 20s.

Things you may have felt were inappropriate to divulge to your son or daughter at an earlier age may have considerable value now. Such candor on your part encourages open, two-way communication between the two of you.

Acknowledging that you've overcome adversity and that you've learned from your mistakes provides a powerful life lesson from your son or daughter's most valued teacher and role model—you.

TIP 48

AVOID LATE SEMESTER PLANS

“It took my parents a while to understand that I need two uninterrupted weeks to study for final exams.”

CASEY, SOPHOMORE EDUCATION MAJOR

As much as 70% of a student's grades may be determined during the last three to four weeks of the semester.

At the end of a semester, students often have a number of tests, class assignments, end-of-semester projects, and final exams. For that reason, you should not plan late semester campus visits or expect your student to visit home—unless he/she wants to catch up on sleep, enjoy some home cooking, and hit the books in a quiet, distraction-free environment.

The end of the semester can be a stressful time for students, which makes it a great time to send a note of encouragement or support, or perhaps a Care Package.

TIP 49

REMAIN FLEXIBLE: CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE

“My parents hung in there with me through all my ups and downs. I’m forever grateful.”

HANNAH, RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATE

Most parents and students plan on four years of college, followed by a job or graduate school. But that often doesn't happen.

The majority of students, in fact, require more than four years to graduate. A change in majors may require additional coursework; failed or withdrawn classes may need to be retaken; and illness, mental health concerns, or financial issues may result in a student temporarily returning home.

None of these circumstances are uncommon or necessarily harmful. But they can be inconvenient and challenging, and may incur extra expenses. With patience, and guidance from college personnel, a change in academic plans can be managed—and will often later be viewed as a minor "bump in the road."

TIP 50

DISCUSS SUMMER PLANS

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Students on a four-year plan have three summers prior to graduation.

Here are a few ways students can make the most of their summers.

Enroll in a course: Taking one or more courses at a local college (or online) over the summer has several advantages. More study time is available for a particularly difficult course, it may lighten the next semester's course load—or speed up graduation. *Students need to meet with their Academic Advisor to ensure that all credits will transfer.*

Get a job or an internship: Recruiters and professional schools look favorably upon students with work experience. Summer jobs also help defray education costs.

Volunteer: Students who volunteer contribute to their community, receive personal satisfaction, develop new skills, and impress future recruiters.

TIP 51

REFLECT AND CELEBRATE

“The greatest thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving.”

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Think of all the milestones that have led to this day.

The birth of your child. First steps and first words. The Terrible Twos, grade school, and even middle school. The great (and perhaps the not so great) vacations, school plays, and teacher conferences. The driver's license, prom, and graduation. Moments where you beamed with pride. And moments of frustration and exasperation. That's the nature of parenting.

Whatever path you traveled—your son or daughter made it to college. This is no small feat, so pat yourself on the back for a job well done, and relish what comes next.

51 TIP REVIEW

- TIP 1 Embrace Your New Role
- TIP 2 Discuss Communication Preferences
- TIP 3 Establish Financial Ground Rules
- TIP 4 Teach Your Student the Basics
- TIP 5 Share Your Expectations
- TIP 6 Understand Parental Rights and FERPA
- TIP 7 Keep Your Student's Bedroom Intact
- TIP 8 Avoid Helicopter Parenting
- TIP 9 Actively Listen
- TIP 10 Learn About Student Services
- TIP 11 Understand that Homesickness is Normal
- TIP 12 Discuss Health Insurance
- TIP 13 Recognize the Impact on Younger Siblings
- TIP 14 Plan College Visits Far in Advance
- TIP 15 Recommend Involvement in Organizations

- TIP 16 Anticipate Academic Struggles
- TIP 17 Provide Updates from Home
- TIP 18 Talk About Drug and Alcohol Use
- TIP 19 Unless It's Necessary, Leave the Car at Home
- TIP 20 Accept the Inevitability of Illness
- TIP 21 Discuss the Importance of Academic Advisors
- TIP 22 Visit the Campus in Moderation
- TIP 23 Provide Relevant Information
- TIP 24 Fill the Empty Nest
- TIP 25 Understand How the College is Organized
- TIP 26 Think Before Blaming the Roommate
- TIP 27 Keep Up On College Events
- TIP 28 Understand that Career Indecision is Normal
- TIP 29 Recognize the Value of Resident Assistants
- TIP 30 Encourage Use of Student Discounts
- TIP 31 Clarify House Rules During Home Visits

- TIP 32 Recommend Extra Help When Needed
- TIP 33 Be Wary of Credit Cards
- TIP 34 Send Care Packages
- TIP 35 Schedule Hometown Appointments
- TIP 36 Discuss Sexual Assault
- TIP 37 Beware of Providing Misinformation
- TIP 38 Encourage Visiting Career Services
- TIP 39 Address Extra Expenses
- TIP 40 Discuss the Value of Internships
- TIP 41 Encourage Your Student to Talk It Out
- TIP 42 Visit the Financial Aid Office
- TIP 43 Encourage Early Applications
- TIP 44 Anticipate Change in Your Student
- TIP 45 Discuss Working While in College
- TIP 46 Review Course Withdrawal Policies
- TIP 47 Share Your Experiences
- TIP 48 Avoid Late Semester Plans
- TIP 49 Remain Flexible: Circumstances Change
- TIP 50 Discuss Summer Plans
- TIP 51 Reflect and Celebrate

*“The most important thing that parents
can teach their children is
how to get along without them.”*

Frank A. Clark

About the Authors

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