



Making the Transition to College

Academic:

Learn about resources. Each college/university will have their own support services including: tutoring, writing help, career center, advising, counseling, etc. It is important to remember that reaching out before you encounter a problem will help you be prepared when something does arise.

Utilize your professors. Professors are experts in their field. Communicating with professors, attending office hours, and asking for help will set you up for success.

Do not simply rely on what worked in high school. A college curriculum comes with a new set of academic challenges and opportunities. Be prepared to spend more time on homework, test prep, and studying. Old study habits may need to be altered for success in college.

Remember why you are in college. While the college experience is about more than just course work, remember that you are a student first. Time management skills, planning ahead, and starting strong from your first term will help you make the most of your experience.

Social:

Be open-minded. Whether exploring campus with a new roommate, attending an event, or inviting other students to a meal, remember that all freshman are new and navigating this experience. Stay open to new friendships and new experiences.

Get involved. Research shows that college students who are involved outside of the classroom perform better academically and report greater satisfaction with their overall college experience. Colleges plan extensively for the first six weeks of school to help new students get involved. Attend club fairs, try a new activity, and even just keep your door open. You will thank yourself later.

Tips for Families:

Talk about it. Don't wait until moving day to discuss your thoughts and feelings about your student leaving for college. Your excitement and joy is likely mixed with nostalgia and loss. Sharing will help normalize the experience.

Expect change. As emerging adults, students will change as they explore who and what they want to be. Ideas and attitudes may change. Appearance may change. Majors may change. Support and patience are key!

Coach, don't fix. Now is the time to go from manager to mentor. Students often confuse newfound autonomy with lack of responsibility. Guiding and encouraging them to do things for themselves will help them gain the experience they will need to meet life's challenges. Encourage your student to learn about campus resources and to make use of them to address concerns and solve their problems.

Sources: University of North Carolina, Wilmington, Counseling Center; USA Today Tips for College; Marquette University, Office of Student Development; Alexander Astin, Theory of Student Involvement.