

MY CHILD'S GOING OFF TO COLLEGE... NOW WHAT?

12 TIPS FOR PARENTS

You can never be fully prepared for the moment your child goes off to college. The realization that your son or daughter is now a young, independent man or woman is bittersweet. But being independent doesn't mean your child is completely on his or her own. They still rely on your advice, support, and encouragement to help them through their toughest college years.

Staff and faculty at Averett University strive to provide your child with the necessary resources to ensure their success inside and outside of the classroom. We encourage them to continually develop their interpersonal skills and engage in independent thinking and action.

To ease this transition process, we've created a list of ways to help you as a parent stay connected with your son or daughter in college while also guiding them to become mature, independent thinkers and doers.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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Inquire less often

Allow your child to initiate the conversation. Give him or her space and time to adjust to their surroundings before asking them questions. When you do talk, keep an open mind and listen intently to what your child has to say.

Not always the "Best Years of their Lives"

A true college experience is filled with good and bad experiences. Inform your child of the realistic expectations in college. Not everything will go as planned, and that's okay. Refrain from comparing your college experience to theirs. Allow them to forge their own path and make mistakes along the way.

Don't worry

For the past 18 years, you've nurtured and nourished your child. You've taught them plenty of life lessons and have instilled in them healthy habits. Trust that they'll use these skills in college.

Expect changes

There'll be changes in interests, friend groups, or even dietary habits. Your role is to monitor these changes and be supportive of their decisions. Be quick to listen and slow to intervene.

Pre-plan your visits to campus

Surprise parties are fun, but parent surprise visits are not. Make sure to inform your child of any upcoming visits and allow them to plan the activities. They'll want to introduce you to their new friends and show you their favorite hangout spots.

Encourage your child to use campus resources

Your child may reach their senior year of college and still not know what services Averett's Center for Community Engagement and Career Competitiveness (CCECC) provides for him or her. (FYI: The CCECC helps students find internships and career opportunities in the Danville area) Encourage your child to familiarize themselves with the Student Success Center if they need tutoring or the Counseling Center if they are feeling anxious or stressed.

Notice unusual changes in behavior or mood

If any odd or concerning behavior persists and begins to negatively interfere with your child's daily activities, please talk with them immediately and contact the university counselor or dean of students.

Discuss academic goals and overall expectations

Provide the necessary structure for your child to excel in their studies and personal lives. College instructors encourage their students to be self-taught learners, which mean they are responsible for registering for class, purchasing the textbook, showing up to class, and doing their work. Remind your child that although they may have been a top student in high school, they could face tougher competition in college. Still, that should never deter them from achieving their academic goals and pursuits.

Encourage responsibility

Before your child arrives on campus, teach them how to do their laundry, cook simple meals, clean their living space, pay bills, cash checks, and schedule doctor appointments.

Notify your child of what's happening at home

First year students are often overwhelmed by new experiences and unexpected changes in a totally new environment. Letting your child know that their pet is doing well or their younger sibling made honor roll brings them a sense of comfort and familiarity.

Correspond with letters and care packages

While your child may refer to letters as "snail mail," they are quick to open and read them. Encouraging notes and cards can be uplifting, especially during stressful exam times. Students may also be low on cash near the end of the semester, so include a couple \$20 bills or a Walmart gift card with your letter. Personalize a care package for your child. This will help them refuel and recharge their mind and body. Include snacks, candy, soup, or even socks! (They might've lost a couple of pairs while doing laundry.)

Enjoy your time spent with them

Avoid spending your visits berating or lecturing your child. Ask them about their experiences. Listen and learn from them. College is a life-changing and rewarding experience for both students and parents. At the end of their four years, your child will thank you for answering their 2am phone calls, making the long drive to be with them on their birthday, or supporting them when they changed their major yet again.

additional resources for parents:

- www.transitionyear.org
- www.collegeparents.org