

Sending Kids Off to College

Before you know it, it will be time to pack lunches, do homework and start getting kids to bed on time. But what if your “kid” is getting ready for college and not another year of high school?

High school seniors who are going away to college can experience emotional challenges, such as leaving lifelong friends and moving to an unfamiliar state and surroundings. Even if your child isn’t going away to college, attending a university near home still has its challenges. High school seniors are used to knowing everything and everybody. They know where everything is and where to go if they have questions that need answers. In a few weeks, all of that will change.

Being supportive, available and understanding are some of the best things that parents can do to help their child through this challenging time. However, it’s not just a difficult time for kids, it’s also a difficult time for parents. Sending a son or daughter off to college is not an easy thing to do, especially if it’s for the first time. Here are some tips that can help you and your family survive freshman year:

- **Know the rules.** Read the school catalog carefully. New freshmen can get into trouble by not knowing rules, regulations, deadlines, etc. Orientation programs for new students are helpful, but cannot provide all of the information about a school. Find out in advance about tuition due dates, class drop deadlines, grade point average requirements, etc.
- **Write!** There is nothing worse for new students than an empty mailbox. Getting news from home, no matter how boring, can really maintain family ties. Keep the cards, letters and e-mail flowing, but don’t expect too much in return!
- **Trust your child.** You’ve done your job; now let them do theirs. Try to give your child room to make some decisions and mistakes on his/her own. Know when your child could use your advice and don’t be surprised when he/she actually calls and asks for it.
- **Develop a budget.** It’s hard for students to know how much money they will need every month for expenses, especially when they are not used to buying everyday things like toothpaste. Try to come up with a set budget and review it after a few months have passed. Remember that students will spend as much as they are given.
- **Grades may fall.** Don’t be surprised if the first semester grades are lower than normal. Moving away to college brings a lot of changes and adjustments. Some students manage these changes better than others. It usually takes a semester to sort things out and learn the ropes. Second semester grades usually show improvement.
- **Know the services available on campus.** Students tend to call home for help when it is right under their nose. Most universities and colleges are like small communities and have services ready and waiting for students in need. Your child may have a high fever and sore throat and call you to bring him home because he may not know that the university’s health center is only a short walk away. Know what’s available so that you can provide practical advice to your child.
- **Be there for your young person.** Starting college is a lot like the first day of kindergarten. This is a time for your child to test her wings and she needs to know that you’ll be there if she falls. Do everything you can to make her feel secure and loved. It will go a long way in contributing to her success.

Sending your child to college is truly a milestone event. It can bring on waves of happiness and sadness all at the same time.

Call Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at **1-800-442-4061**

Log on to www.MagellanHealth.com for information, self-help tools and other resources. Or call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.