

## HELPFUL TIPS FOR PARENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

- 1. Do not ask if your child is homesick.**

The power of association can be a dangerous thing. The first few weeks of school are action-packed; adjusting to new people and new situations takes up a majority of a freshman's time and concentration. Unless they're reminded of it, they'll probably get over the loneliness and homesickness. And even if they don't tell you during those first few weeks, they do miss you.
- 2. Ask Questions (but not too many).**

College freshman have a tendency to resent interference with their newfound lifestyle, but they desire the assurance of knowing that parents are still concerned.  
Honest inquiries and friendly discussions can strengthen the bond you have with your son or daughter.
- 3. Expect Change (but not too much).**

Your son or daughter will change. It's natural, inevitable, and can be inspiring. Remember that a freshman will be basically the same person that you sent away to school, aside from interest changes and personality revisions. Don't expect too much too soon.  
Maturation is not an instantaneous process.
- 4. Never visit unannounced.**

Students like to know that you are coming.  
If you do come unannounced you better bear something unbelievable.
- 5. Write. Email.**

Though most first-year students in all areas are eager to experience their newfound independence, they also rely on the security of family ties. There's nothing more depressing than a week of empty mailboxes. Remind them that you're still around. (Warning: Do not expect a reply to every letter you write).
- 6. Do not worry excessively about "down in the dumps" phone calls or e-mails.**

Often when trouble becomes too much for a freshman to handle (failing a test, an ended relationship), the only place to turn is home. Often, unfortunately, this is the only time the urge to communicate is felt so strongly, so you never get to hear about the "A" paper or the new significant other.  
In these crisis times, they may unload trouble or tears of anger, then return to routine, relieved and lightened, while you inherit the worry. Be patient with this type of communication. Granted it's a service that makes you feel lousy, but it works wonders for a frustrated student.

7. **Do not tell them these are the best years of their lives.**  
Freshman year (and the other four as well) can be full of discovery, inspiration, and fun as well as indecision, disappointment, and mistakes. Often, except in retrospect, it's not the good times that stand out. Parents who perpetuate the "best years" myth are working against their student's development.  
Try to accept and understand both the highs and lows of college life.
  
8. **Care packages go a long way.**  
All students love to get care packages from the family, especially during midterms and finals.  
Think about sending homemade snacks, articles from the hometown newspaper, snapshots of the family, CD's or cassette tapes, books, stamps and envelopes. And, oh yes, did we say cash?!
  
9. **Trust them.**  
Students are undergoing a challenging period of personal growth at this time. They probably don't need their parents to second-guess their second-guessing.
  
10. **Allow them to fly, but leave room in the nest!**  
They will return home. They are not gone forever.