

FIRST YEAR SURVIVAL TIPS FOR PARENTS

Adapted from Gladis, S. (2003, August 14). College parents learn to survive the first year. [Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com) [online], Available: <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

OFFER ROOTS & WINGS

The first year is a real balancing act for parents- between providing stability during a year of significant changes and letting go as your child stabilizes. Give more freedom and support.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE

Stay in touch through mail, phone calls, instant messenger and email. There is no reason to lose contact, especially in the beginning of the semester. Communication from your child may be constant at first when all is exciting and taper off during the semester as the pressures of deadlines increase. Be intentional, tell them how you are and ask how they are doing.

FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT

Be prepared for the roller coaster ride when the excitement of the first few weeks of new roommates and interesting classes fade into despair over exams, projects and interpersonal conflicts. It may be a rough road, but most students experience this whirlwind of change and mixed feelings.

HANG TOUGH

When listening to your child's distress you may feel helpless. The most important assistance you can give is to listen. Raised voices and high tension may occur, but hang in there. Listen, share your opinion when necessary and listen some more.

ASK FOR HELP

Ask advice from other parents who have experienced the first year of college with their children and ask recent college graduates their opinions. Other parents and graduates who have experienced this exciting time often have good advice for both you and your student. If you sense a serious problem with your child, do not hesitate to contact the school's counseling office. Counselors are confidential and will listen to you and may ask your student in the office for a listening session.

EMBRACE THE QUIET

The quiet of a once busy house bustling with voices and phone calls might be an emotional downer. At first the environmental change might be very difficult, but at some point during the semester it will be refreshing to wake to the stillness.

KEEP EYES HALF SHUT

Once your child returns home for mid-semester breaks or holiday breaks, it may be awkward for all to readjust to each other. As best you can, treat your students like guests, not like big children. Respect gets you a lot further than rules (forget curfews), advice and criticism. It's not easy, but effective.

VISIT STUDENTS CAREFULLY

Visiting your students should be planned with care and sensitivity. Realize you are entering the turf of your child (and roommates). Some tips to consider: ask permission ahead of time. Be sensitive not to dominate your child's entire day. Take them out to a meal. Give a modest amount of cash.

TRUST THEM TO DO THE RIGHT THING

Your lifetime of instruction will not be ignored. Your children know what is right and will usually do just that. When they are miles away, what choice do you have but to trust them?

REMEMBER A SIMPLE PRAYER

Remember the Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Parents and students can benefit from serenity, courage, and wisdom.