

HOME & DIGITAL

At College Orientation, Parents Told to Let Go

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be back in a couple of hours. It's going to be OK."

Once school starts, Mr. Rammel says he plans to "keep in touch and talk to her every day."

Texting, email, video chat and most recently social media make it easy for parents to stay wired to their child, says Karen Levin Coburn, co-author of "Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years."

"I've seen parents who essentially stalk the roommate on Facebook," says Ms. Coburn, senior consultant in residence at Washington University in St. Louis. "They see something, maybe a drinking party or a certain religion, and then call the school and say, 'I don't want my child rooming with that person.'"

Decisions like what to major in and which roommate to live with should primarily be left up to the students, Ms. Campbell says. During Augustana's registration days, speakers remind parents to leave certain tasks, like filling out roommate questionnaires or organizing dorm rooms, to their children. Ms. Campbell says the sessions for parents are held in an auditorium without cellphone service intentionally to let students register for classes free of parental influence.

"It's my generation's fault," says Ramona Clucas, whose daughter Mara will attend Augustana in the fall. "We overbook our kids with activities and lessons, and they don't have time to learn those basic skills," like how to talk to professors or manage money.

Mr. Rammel says he has a few things to learn before his freshman year. "I've never done laundry in my life," he says. "I can't cook, either. I can make a grilled cheese, and that's about it."

Parents who invest financially in their child's education feel pressure to ensure that their child succeeds academically, says James Boyle, former president of College Parents of America, a non-profit organization that offers resources to member parents. Rising college costs and concerns that their student will drop out may prompt parents to take a more active role in their child's college life, Mr. Boyle says. After freshman year, parents usually relax, he adds.

Help on Hovering>>

Scan this image to watch a video with Sanette Tanaka on how colleges are helping parents let go, or watch it at WSJ.com/Lifestyle.



Matthew Holst for The Wall Street Journal (3)



Some parents may not be aware that their actions are not in their child's best interests, says Colleen Bench, director of the parents office at Syracuse University.

"I can't tell you how many calls I get that begin, 'Colleen, I'm not being a helicopter parent, but...'" Ms. Bench says.

To stay connected, Nancy Yuen signed up for regular email updates from San Francisco State University, where her daughter Elizabeth will be

a sophomore in the fall. Ms. Yuen also joined the parents' council, got the cellphone number of Elizabeth's roommate and posted Elizabeth's class and activity schedule on the refrigerator. She says having this information made her feel better.

But Elizabeth Yuen says her parents' quest for information can be stressful to her—especially since she lives in a dorm only three miles away from her parents.

"Whenever I left campus, I had to

text them who I was going with, where I was going and when I'd be back," Elizabeth says.

College life may come as a shock to parents who devote a significant amount of time and energy to their children in high school. No longer responsible for driving Elizabeth to and from ballet lessons, church youth group and volunteering, Ms. Yuen says her evenings got two hours longer. Still, she couldn't hide her excitement when Elizabeth said she

needed rides to ballet lessons in the spring. "I felt useful again," Ms. Yuen says.

Now that she has finished her freshman year and is interning in Washington, D.C., Elizabeth says her parents are starting to "let go."

"If I make a mistake, it's my mistake, and I'll have to live with it," she says. "It's true that I don't know how to handle everything, but at the same time, I feel like I need to learn on my own."



Torn Between Two Phones, Some Users Wish for an iBerry

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that view—up to a point. "It's just not really practical for anything besides emailing," she says. But her BlackBerry serves up her work email messages very fast, Ms. Slavin says. As important, she can type on it without looking at the keypad. She also likes its instant-messaging feature, known as BBM, as well as its calendar, which syncs with her work PC.

Her iPhone, on the other hand, covers everything else. Ms. Slavin uses it for phone calls, text messages, her personal Gmail account and Web browsing. She also updates her social media, including Facebook, on her iPhone, so she considers it a networking tool. And besides, she says, "the iPhone is so pretty."

The two phones "complement each other really nicely," says Allen Adamson, a managing director at branding firm Landor Associates, New York, and himself a dual iPhone-BlackBerry user.

"Having two devices is often a more powerful solution," Mr. Adamson says. "If you're pounding out a ton of emails, it is very hard to do on an iPhone unless you're very, very fast or a 15-year-old."

Frank Boulben, RIM's newly appointed chief marketing officer, says he is well aware of the two-phone phenomenon, noting that many work-issued BlackBerries have nonessential applications disabled. Users aren't getting a full BlackBerry experience, he says. "We are going to try and address those individuals differently with BlackBerry 10," he says, referring to RIM's next line of phones, which is expected to launch early next year.



Stephen Matyasfalvi (2)

"It would be much more convenient for you to manage all aspects of your personal life and professional life on the same device," Mr. Boulben says, adding that RIM is planning a number of innovations to help users do that. An Apple spokeswoman didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

For the fashion-conscious, sleek iPhone and Samsung phones are unlikely to raise eyebrows the way the often-bulky BlackBerry does.

"I hide my BlackBerry unless I actually need to use it," says Stephen Matyasfalvi, 38, a Toronto business

consultant. "If I am choosing what device to have out for browsing, calling, etc., it's the iPhone and not the BlackBerry. It's not even about being cooler with the iPhone, they just look so much better!"

The same goes for Mr. Matyasfalvi's husband, Matti Gidilevich, who also uses both an iPhone and a BlackBerry, after switching back and forth between the two for several years. Mr. Gidilevich, 35, a director at the Toronto office of Elite Model Management, splits his time between Toronto and New York, and splits his tasks between the two phones. He



Business consultant Stephen Matyasfalvi, above left, and husband Matti Gidilevich, have four phones between them. They sometimes don't know which is ringing on their bedside table, left.

uses his BlackBerry for email, and takes pictures and checks out social media sites with the iPhone.

For a couple with four phones, there are multiple annoyances. When a phone rings they have to check all four. Their bedside table is piled high with devices and chargers.

"It's the nature of the work we do," Mr. Matyasfalvi says. "We both need to keep in touch with clients and friends, so for now we put up with it."

When out to dinner with friends, Messrs. Gidilevich and Matyasfalvi make a point of keeping their phones

off the table. But not out of politeness. They do it so friends won't make fun of them. Plopping four phones on a table takes up a lot of space, and results in some unwanted attention.

"Friends say, 'What are you people doing?!' You guys look like you're part of CSIS [the Canadian Security Intelligence Service], or 'Is this command central?'" Mr. Matyasfalvi says. "So we don't even bother to put them out."

In fact, ridicule is part of life for many dual-phone users. Yousaf Khurshid, the Canada sales manager for United Leg Wear, a clothing manufacturer, travels regularly between Canada and the U.S. He emails with his BlackBerry and photographs retail spaces with his personal iPhone.

"It drives me crazy, and I look ridiculous," Mr. Khurshid, 32, says, of constantly juggling two phones. "People call me Data. They say, 'What's up, Data?' I just go back to writing my email."

Another challenge is that it is even harder for multiple phone users to disconnect from technology. A few times, Messrs. Gidilevich and Matyasfalvi tried to completely unplug and turn all four phones off. "We tried," Mr. Matyasfalvi says. "Lasted an hour."

—Elizabeth Holmes contributed to this article.

Clinging to Blackberry>>

Scan this image to watch a video with Will Connors on the iPhone and BlackBerry, or watch it at WSJ.com/Tech.

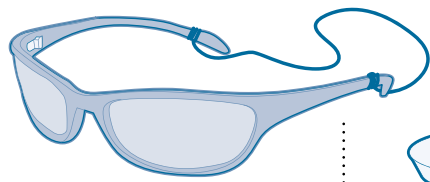
MULTITASKER: Rubber Bands

If there were a Hall of Fame for office supplies, the rubber band would surely be a candidate for induction (coming in just behind the paper clip, but ahead of the thumbtack). Beyond binding newspapers and household items, here are five novel uses compiled by Paul Michael with frugal-living blog WiseBread.

—By Beth DeCarbo

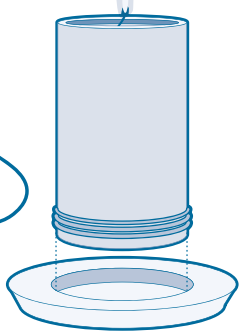
Sports-glasses holder

Don't lose your glasses in the heat of the game. Cut through a thick rubber band and tie each end to the temple piece. Knotted ends should be covered by hair (to minimize the nerd factor) but not rub against the back of the ear, which could irritate the skin.



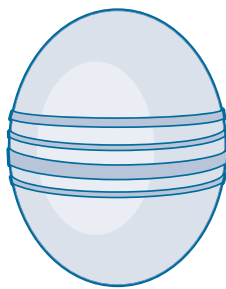
Candle de-wobbler

Twist a rubber band around the end of a candle and wedge it into the base.



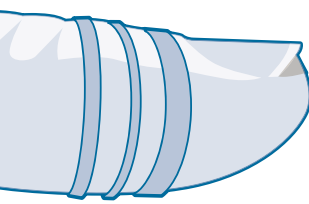
Easter-egg decorator

Wrap multiple rubber bands of differing widths around a hard-boiled egg before dunking it into the dye.



Rubber thimble

If you have to count or shuffle a lot of papers, wrap a few rubber bands around the tip of your index finger to create friction. Just don't wrap it too tightly.



Paintbrush scraper

Remove the lid from a can of paint, then wrap a rubber band around the can from top to bottom. Wipe excess paint from the brush across the rubber band instead of on the inside edge of the can. That way, paint won't spatter when the lid is tapped back into place.

