

College and University: The Complete Guide for Supportive Parents

Via [Penniless Parenting](#) by Penniless Parenting



You would think that with my oldest kids being 14 and 12, college is a far away concept for me, but my 12 year old has already looked at colleges that he wants to go to, and my 14 year old has also talked about it. If you, like myself, are thinking about college for your children, whether it is something immediate or further in the future, read on to learn how to be a more supportive parent.



As parents, we all want what's best for our children. This becomes increasingly apparent when they reach pivotal points of their life and start making decisions that can impact their future. A key point for most teens? The point at which they leave school and decide what direction to take next. Your teen may decide that higher education is on the cards for them and you're going to want to do what you can to make this journey as positive and beneficial as possible for them in every way, shape and form. But what can you do to assist with this and be as supportive as you can? Here are some suggestions that can help!

Make Sure There's No Pressure

First and foremost, you need to really ensure that your child is making a decision of their own when it comes to heading to university or college. A lot of teens just go with the flow and follow what their friends are doing. Some will just assume it's something that they have to do. Some will go purely because they think it's what you want. You need to make sure that your teen is fully aware that there are plenty of options out there for them to choose from. This includes heading straight into work, travelling, picking up an apprenticeship and more. Highlight the pros and cons of each option and let them make their own decision. Pressure should be minimal at this point, as you want to help them make a decision that is right for them.

Assistance with Choosing an Institution

There are countless [universities and colleges](#) out there, and there are countless courses to go with them. Your teen may need help settling on the right option for them. Now, you shouldn't barge in and choose a course that you think they should take, or place pressure on them to get into a specific college that you think will be good for them. Instead, it's your job to display all the different options available to them. Encourage them to think about the courses they enjoy taking. Where their talents lie. What kind of role they'd like to step into once they leave education. Then encourage them to look at league tables, to consider different locations and what they have to offer, to decide whether they want to stay closer to home or move further afield. Only your teen will know which option best suits them and they will ultimately make the right decision for their needs. You can help further by helping them to get to open days to view the places they're interested in and get a feel for the campus, accommodation and the area.

Provide Additional Resources

Sometimes, college students will need a helping hand around their studies, or will greatly benefit and enhance their education by using additional resources. Make sure that your teens are aware of the options that are available to them. This could range from extra tuition, pairing up with older students who can provide knowledge and insight into the course, [university worksheets](#) or the endless array of free online resources from Instagram to Youtube, TikTok and more where great snippets of information are shared.

Encourage Good Work-Life Balance

Something that many students struggle with is maintaining a good work-life balance. This, after all, tends to be the time that they are first fully in control of their work and social life, making completely independent decisions as to what they want to do and when they want to do it. Most students swing one of two ways - some will focus excessively on work at the expense of their social life, while others will focus excessively on their social life at the expense of their work. You need to encourage balance so that they can hit their deadlines and perform well at the same time as benefiting from all of the real world experience and social experience that university provides too.

Financial Support

Not everyone is in the position to [support their child financially](#) through college. If you are, you should reach out and

help in whatever way you can. If not, you can still assist your child in this area by helping them to look into different funding opportunities that could meet their needs and provide the funds they need to get through their studies. Whatever your situation, there is some way you can support your teen through this.

Emotional Support

Make sure that your teen knows you're always there for emotional support too. Leaving for college or university can be extremely daunting. Think about it. This is the first time your teen will likely live by themselves and take on full responsibility for their own lives. They are bound to experience ups and downs in the process, whether individual or as a cause of others at their institution. You need to make sure that they know that you will always be there if they need. Nowadays, this is easier than ever. With phone calls, video calls, instant chat and more, you can keep in touch, checking in as and when they need to provide a shoulder to cry on, someone to vent to or anything else.

Boundaries

Of course, you're going to want your teen to feel independent too. This is when they grow and it's a good idea to implement healthy boundaries that will allow them to be adults at the same time as showing you care. Your teen can lead the way on this one. Through frank discussions or general intuition, you'll be able to tell what they feel comfortable with and what they don't. Maintain good boundaries so that they can enjoy their time without feeling stifled or penned in.

As you can see, there are so many different areas you need to take into consideration when your teen is heading off to college or university - and those outlined above are just scratching the surface! Hopefully, some of the information will help you to get the journey off to a good start.