

# Getting your student ready to enter college

FRIDAY, JULY 21, 2006

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**Y**our daughter or son is heading to college. You realize the student needs help to get ready aca-

demically, financial-ly and organize what he or she brings to their dorm room. First time students also need to be prepared emotionally.

Remember the journey students has taken thus far. They've completed a lengthy senior year; including SAT testing, proms, completing college applications, waiting for admission results; being accepted or rejected, determining the most promising college, and graduating from high school.

For some students, they leave their schools feeling like sports stars, student government leaders, accomplished musicians, scholars. For others, they have remained under the radar; enjoying their circle of friends, yet disliking the limelight. There are also the students that weren't especially fond of high school and are looking forward to a new beginning in college. Regardless of your student's profile, he or she is leaving, and is about to encounter a new chapter.

Talk to your student about expectations and concerns. Although excited, your student may also be anxious and overwhelmed. Listen closely to what the student says and doesn't say.

The first conversation may be focused on how the student is dealing with leaving high school, friends, teachers and familiar surroundings. Some will be ready to move on, whereas others may need the summer to grieve their losses.

An important conversation for many dating students is whether or not to remain in their high school relationship. In soliciting information from a small sample of recent college graduates, they noted the following reasons for continuing the relationship:

## THE HOMEFRONT



CONSTANCE  
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The first was that of safety.

Freshmen experience numerous adjustments and it was comforting to stay with someone they cared about even if they were not able to see them often. The relationship also served to discourage other people from pursuing them.

Another reason for staying with your high school sweetheart was not feeling emotionally ready to let them go. For many, this is their first love. Ending prematurely could be devastating.

There can also be an argument for ending the relationship or as one college president advised an incumbent class during orientation, "Leave your high school honey at home." Many would attest, juggling an old high school relationship and entering college is too hard and inhibits fully joining in with new classmates.

For example, Jessica went off to a small southern college while her boyfriend entered a local university. She struggled to connect with others, and often felt homesick for him. Eventually, she experienced him as controlling. By winter break, she ended the relationship. When she returned to college in the spring, she felt socially behind her colleagues and needed to work hard to catch up.

A different conversation may pertain to expectations around sharing a dormitory room. Although colleges try to match students based on similar habits, sharing space can still be a challenge. Typical areas of difficulty are TVs, partying, and friends always in the room.

Ask your students about issues related to peer-pressure, decision-making, choices and responsibilities. Within this type of discussion, often the subject of alcohol or drugs can surface. What are their attitudes and expectations? We know that drinking is pervasive on most college campuses. Are they aware that alcohol can go from being a party drink to a poison? Jed, a bright student, was 21 when he learned this difficult fact.

The night of his 21st birthday his parents received a call from the cam-