

Your support is the most important help you can provide for your teenager. It doesn't matter whether or not you went to college – by encouraging your children and assuring them that college is important and that they can succeed, you can help them far more than anyone else.

**Help them understand what is expected**

The college environment is much different from that of the high school. It gives students a tremendous amount of freedom – no one is constantly monitoring their progress or reminding them of class work and due dates. Often, no one is checking to see if they are even going to class, or whether they are doing and handing in the assignments. Your student should be prepared to do a lot of their learning on their own when they begin college. Self-motivation and discipline are important factors in successfully completing college level courses.

**Let them do it on their own**

High school students in college classes are treated no differently than any other college student. There are no parent conferences, and any communication regarding students is restricted due to FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). College is the time for parents to make the transition from being the primary advocate to becoming a supporter. Help your teenagers learn by instilling the message that their academic success depends on their taking responsibility for their own education and behavior.

**Discover what a college has to offer**

Support systems are available at colleges, such as learning labs, free tutoring, career planning, transfer services and computer access, but students must seek out the services, ask for the help and follow through. You can make sure your teenager finds out about all the resources available through a college's Student Services department.

**How much work is involved for my student and how can I help?**

The general rule is: For every one hour spent in class, college students should spend two hours out of class reading, studying and other appointments. The best way to provide enough time for studying is to look at your teenager's schedule with them. You can help them select and plan specific times during the week that can be set aside for studying. This time should be set when there are likely no interruptions. The study site is also important – do they need help and should study at the college library, school library or do they need a quiet place at home out of the pathway of normal family life? Again, you and your student are both making a transition. You are becoming more of a support and less of a "doer". Your student is learning to take much more responsibility for their own learning and management of their school experience.

**What else can I do to help?**

You can help by becoming familiar with the college website. You can learn about the courses, get a copy of the syllabus (what the student will be learning and doing in the class), learn about deadlines for registration and payment of tuition and fees. This can provide you with material for discussion with your student. You can learn from the discussions whether your teenager has taken care of the necessary procedures and whether or not you may have to help them. There is a lot of information to be learned on the website that will help you feel more comfortable with knowledge of what your student is doing and needs to do to be successful in college.