If your child is about to embark on that great personal journey called the college years, you may well be feeling a mixture of excitement and dread. You are not alone. Very few parents know quite what to expect when their kids go away to school.

You’re probably wondering: What is my role now that my child is no longer at home? Why does my daughter seem independent one minute, indecisive and confused the next? How will I know if my son is in trouble—and if he is, what should I do about it?

A new dimension to parenting

People talk a lot about learning to “let go” when a child leaves for college. But rather than “letting go,” we think you should focus more on letting a child “grow.” In fact, parents can play an incredibly important role in the life of a college student, especially during the first year.

Researchers have discovered that a specific style of parenting—one that provides warmth and support while encouraging independence—has a positive impact on a college student’s academic performance and self-esteem. In our years of working with parents and students, we have found that the most successful relationships occur when you step back from being a “controlling” parent and shift your style to that of being a “consultant.”

This means guiding your child through a process that will help him or her to address daily problems, make difficult decisions and, one day, become fully independent.

The 24/7 connection

Communicating with a college student these days is very different from what most of us experienced when we went away for school. But just because you can be connected to your son or daughter 24/7 doesn’t make it a good idea. Constant access can encourage an unhealthy involvement in every aspect of your child’s life.

Hearing about the inevitable ups and downs that happen from moment to moment in college students’ lives makes it tempting to weigh in, make decisions and try to solve problems that your kids should be dealing with themselves.

Continued on page 2...
Step back from being constantly in touch. Talk to your child about checking in a couple of times a week when you both have time for a conversation. Let college students manage their daily life on campus—and be available if a problem or emergency arise.

Be honest, too. If you like getting texts or calls from your college student several times a day, it may be time to wean yourself.

Seeing your child off
Whether it’s at a residence hall or an airport, you probably dreaded the moment. And we’ve all observed arrival-day scenes of students with parents in tow: families confused and concerned, students trying to distance themselves from their parents and siblings.

Try this instead:
▶ If possible, have that meaningful conversation and tearful goodbye before you leave home.
▶ Exit gracefully with a quick hug—preferably when no one else is around, and be on your way.
▶ Tour the campus and attend parents’ events on your own.
▶ Do something fun with the rest of your family.

By all means, avoid:
▶ A long, drawn-out leave-taking. And do resist the temptation to come back for one last goodbye. It’s guaranteed to be an unsatisfying experience for all.

Typical parental concerns
Whether you are a single parent, divorced or part of a blended or traditional family, you’ll surely feel the loss of a family member who’s away at school. Parents who make the trip to college alone may feel the separation more intensely.

Parents are naturally concerned about issues of safety, adjustment and what the college culture might be like. Students are no longer isolated from the larger world.

Many young people try out new ideas during their college years. And you may not enjoy the experimentation with hairstyles, music, tattoos, religious questioning and lifestyle adventures.

Just remember that you laid the groundwork for growth and change through years of instilling values in your child. And research has found that most students finish college with their family’s core values intact.

Dealing with stress
Adjusting to college life can be a big challenge. Students have to take care of themselves, make friends, find a place in the social scene and handle increased academic expectations. Many kids miss the predictability of home and their high school friends.

What a parent can do:
▶ Listen to your college student’s anxieties. Express your empathy.
▶ Let your child know that you care. Ask if you can be helpful.
▶ Express your confidence in and love for your child.

Try to avoid:
▶ Letting your concerns for your child dominate the conversation.
▶ Dismissing your child’s fears. Saying “just stick it out. Everything will be okay.”
▶ Offering a solution before you have really listened and responded to your child’s feelings.
▶ Warning or threatening: “Do what I told you to do, or you are going to blow this opportunity.”

Drinking is still a problem
During your child’s high school years, you likely dealt with three biggies: drinking, drugs and sex. You shared your values and monitored your child’s behavior. But when she or he goes to college, the situation changes.

When young people live away from home, they have new freedoms and responsibilities. But this doesn’t mean you’ve lost your influence. Most college students may be too cool to admit it—but they still want your approval and value your opinions on these issues.

While you want to trust your child to make smart decisions, responsible parenting also includes making your expectations clear.

What you can do:
▶ Talk to your child about the social culture on campus and the issue of drinking. Ask what she or he thinks of college parties.
▶ Be clear about what you mean by responsible drinking. Acknowledge that college students control their own behavior—and you trust that they will act responsibly.
▶ Remind college students of the possible dire consequences of drinking too much: alcohol poisoning or committing a criminal act that could result in losing a scholarship, being expelled or even going to prison.
▶ Be aware of signs that your child is abusing alcohol. Don’t be afraid to raise the subject. You might say, “I’m concerned about how much you are drinking. Are you concerned about it, too?”

Try to avoid:
▶ Moralizing and lecturing. It just doesn’t work.
▶ Being unrealistic: “Don’t go to any parties that serve alcohol.”
▶ Condoning your child’s drinking or joking with him or her about being a “party animal.”
▶ Supplying your child with liquor when you are visiting campus and drinking a lot yourself.
▶ Denying the problem. Glossing it over with “kids will be kids.”

Bookmark the college website
Events and changes are bound to occur on campus that will affect your child in one way or another. It could be a demonstration over a political issue—especially during this election year—or a change in academic or student life policy.

If you don’t get the information you want from your child or from the administration, the college website is often the best way to find out. Read the student newspaper, which will likely be online as well—and many colleges also have offices and programs geared to parents.

—Adapted from the authors’ book “Don’t Tell Me What to Do. Just Send Money” (St. Martin’s Press). This article appeared earlier in Work & Family Life. For success tips addressed specifically to students, see We Recommend on page 8.
Follow the ‘20-20-20’ rule for computer work

Q: I spend hours every day in front of a computer at work, and I stream films and TV shows on my laptop when I get home. My mom is warning me about “computer vision syndrome.” Is this a real thing to worry about?

—P.E., Detroit

A: Yes, it is. International eye care specialists, writing in the journal Medical Practice and Reviews, say the condition typically includes eye symptoms (blurring, double vision, itching, burning, dryness, redness), lower back pain, tension headaches and stress.

They offered a long list of professionals who work on computers and may be vulnerable—and that’s not counting all the kids who spend many hours a day playing computer games. Here are some ideas for how to lessen computer screen-related eye strain and fatigue:

- Practice the “20-20-20” rule recommended by eye doctors: Every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away.
- Don’t sit too close to the screen: Experts suggest 20 to 26 inches. The closer you are to a monitor, the harder your eyes have to work to accommodate to it.
- Keep your eyes level with the top of the monitor, with the center from 4 to 8 inches lower. This helps minimize dryness and itching and allows the neck to remain in a more relaxed position.
- Reduce glare. Dim overhead lights. Use an antiglare monitor cover. You might also try glare-reducing or tinted lenses.
- If you work from printed materials, mount documents on a stand to reduce neck strain. Computer glasses may help, too.
- Blink consciously to help keep your eyes lubricated. Eye drops such as artificial tears can help too. Some people say it’s a good idea to apply a warm, moist compress to your eyes every morning.

by Nichole Morris.

Teenage driver? It’s time for parents to hover.

We often advise parents to back off. Give your kids opportunities to stretch and grow. In other words, park your parental helicopter, relax and stop hovering.

But new studies suggest one area where we need to do the opposite. If you have a teenage driver in the family, you need to worry more and get much more involved. According to researchers at the University of Minnesota’s HumanFIRST Laboratory:

- The two most dangerous years are between 16 and 17, and the reason is driving. For this age group death in a motor vehicle accident outstrips suicide, cancer and other types of accidents. “Cars have gotten safer, roads have gotten safer, but teen drivers have not,” says researcher Nichole Morris.
- An average of six teenagers a day die from motor vehicle injuries, according to the CDC. In 2013, 2,927 U.S. teens died in crashes. “We believe one in four teens is going to be in a crash in their first six months of driving,” says Virginia Tech Transportation Institute researcher Charlie Klauer.

After seeing the teen-driving research, author and parenting expert Bruce Feiler suggested the following three important road rules.

- Don’t let friends tag along. Adding one non-family passenger to a teenager’s car increases the rate of crashes by 44 percent. The risk doubles with a second passenger, quadruples with three or more. Distraction is highest when boys ride with other boys. Boys are safer when girls are in the car.
- Insist phones be silenced. Beeps and ringtones are hard to ignore, and most teens use their phones for texting, talking or checking social media, even on short trips. If your teenager argues for using the phone for navigation or music, the safest place for the device is at eye level, in a dock on the dashboard. The least safe: The cup holder, driver’s lap or passenger’s seat. The website teendriving.aaa.com offers a sample contract that parents and young drivers can sign, along with agreed-upon consequences.
- Go ahead and be a back-seat parent. Unless you pay close attention, your teens may not be driving as safely as you think they are. The more parents get involved, especially when teens are learning to drive, the lower their chances are for a crash. Ask questions, supervise them under different conditions. “The mistake parents often make,” says Dr Morris, “is thinking, ‘Finally I don’t have to car-pool you everywhere.’”

by Ellen Golinsky, MS, Executive Editor of Work & Family Life, is President of the Families and Work Institute, a researcher on national and international studies, and author of more than 40 books and reports including “Mind in the Making” (HarperCollins).

This is your column. We invite you to send questions about work and family life or tell us how you solved a problem that you think a lot of people face. Write: Dr. Susan Ginsberg, Work & Family Life, 305 Madison Avenue, Suite 1143, New York, NY 10165. Email: workfam@aol.com.
New housing options for independent elders

By 2030, people 65 and older will comprise 20 percent of the U.S. population, a 70 percent increase since 2000. And lots of surveys have told us that older Americans know what they want—and that is to remain independent and in their own homes for as long as possible. It’s called “aging in place.”

This makes the housing needs of millions of older people a huge national issue—with implications for architects, builders, urban planners, retirement communities, gerontologists, the business community and government agencies, among others.

**Planning the future**

Builders, designers and architects are already rethinking spaces for older people. They talk about “age-integrated” homes and communities that will accommodate residents for decades, not just the last years of their lives.

“They want to make ‘design for aging’ imperative—and, heck, even sexy,” says Lisa Selin Davis in an AARP Bulletin report on the future of retirement. “If these innovators have their way, ‘senior housing’ as we have come to know it will improve radically.”

For example, St. John’s on the Lake, a high-rise continuing-care facility in Milwaukee, connects its residents to social and cultural options in its community. And Parkview Living, a block of apartments designed for seniors 62 and older in the Echo Park neighborhood two miles from downtown Los Angeles, markets its surrounding community as an important amenity.

“The conscious coupling of retirement living and the real world is the future,” says M. Scott Ball, author of Livable Communities for Aging Populations. “Senior housing is going to be more like neighborhoods, and neighborhoods will be more like senior housing.”

**Among the new attributes**

In their book 70Candles: Women Thriving in Their 8th Decade, Jane Giddan and Ellen Cole describe some of the home attributes older people will need (and demand) in order to age in place: an absence of stairs, wide doorways to accommodate a wheelchair, slip-resistant flooring, lever-style door knobs, remotely controlled lighting, walk-in showers, railings and lifts. They will also want a 24-hour help system, surveillance cameras and GPS locators to allow family members to monitor their well-being.

“Sikhs explained their religion and their practices, answered our questions...and served us dinner afterwards,” says one participant. “We learned that Sikhs feed anyone who comes in the door.”

**The home-sharing trend**

Research also suggests that if older people are unable to live in their own homes, they might like to live in someone else’s. Blogger Chris Ferrell encourages seniors to consider home-sharing programs that are typically managed by local nonprofits. The idea is to match older homeowners—often empty nesters who could use extra income—with locals looking for reduced rent, usually in exchange for helping around the house.

Communities across the U.S. are being retrofitted to accommodate the “tsunami of elders” who expect to live there as baby boomers age, writes “Health” columnist Jane Brody in The New York Times. For example, many cities have already lengthened their traffic signals and street crossings to give slower-moving pedestrians more time to cross.

New York City launched pilot programs in three neighborhoods as part of its “Age-Friendly NYC” initiative. In Philadelphia, the nonprofit group “Friends in the City” brings seniors together for cultural and recreational activities. Members recently traveled to the Philadelphia Sikh Society.

**Transportation needs**

To age happily in place, of course, older people need access to transportation, and this is a challenge in many parts of the U.S. In fact, the No. 1 reason seniors contact the national Eldercare Locator (1-800-677-1116 or www.eldercare.gov) is to find out about transportation options in their communities.

Each year about 600,000 older Americans stop driving, and many more modify their driving habits, according to the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. Giving up car keys limits access to medical care, shopping and opportunities for socialization.

Even in urban communities with public transportation, many older people choose not to use it for various reasons, such as the distance to transit stops and concerns about safety.

So there’s no simple or single solution to the mobility needs of older adults. Community efforts encompass a variety of approaches including safe driving programs, travel training (mtm-inc.net), volunteer and assisted transportation programs, dial-a-ride and para-transit options.
Making preschool separations easier

It’s heart wrenching on the first day of preschool to have a 3-year-old clinging to your leg and crying, “Don’t go, Mommy.” But it’s normal, even healthy, for a preschooler to experience some separation anxiety.

“It would be a source of concern if a child never exhibited reluctance to separate from loved ones,” says child development specialist Dr. Lilian Katz. “And you would be an unusual parent if you didn’t experience mixed emotions at this time as well.”

**Parental concerns**

We want to help our kids meet new challenges and become independent, but it’s hard to see them growing up so fast—and to realize they can get along without having us around all the time.

In fact, sometimes the parents have more trouble separating than the children. In her book *Everyday Goodbyes*, parenting expert Nancy Balaban cites parental concerns:

- Can this teacher really take care of my child? Will she understand him when he makes requests? Will the teacher like her? What if my child misbehaves? Will he repeat private things about our family? What will happen if my child gets hurt? Can I really trust this person?

These questions can make it difficult for some parents to turn over their child to a teacher’s care.

**Look at the big picture**

Life is full of separations that may make us sad, but they need not be negative. And it’s an important skill that we need to learn in life—how to move with confidence from one experience to another.

By the time most kids start preschool, they have spent short or longer periods of time with caregivers, grandparents and other relatives. They’ve started on the road to discovering that their parents go away and come back, that the world is a reasonably predictable place and they need not fear the unknown.

Think of separation as a learning experience, says early childhood researcher Ellen Galinsky in *The Preschool Years*. “Goodbye also suggests hello to a new experience, a new person or to many people. It’s a point in life when children begin to learn about developing initiative, venturing out, trying new things.”

Handling separation is a step toward self-reliance and maturity. Kids starting school are learning to trust new people in their lives. Day by day, familiarity in a new setting replaces the unknown.

“Establishing comfort with the teacher as a base enables children to become comfortable with the whole classroom,” Balaban says.

**Starting preschool**

The way kids deal with separation depends on their age and stage of development, on how you feel and react, and on what the new experience entails. Keep the following ideas in mind.

- **Your expectations.** Some parents are nervous about their child’s safety or feel conflicted about going back to work. Some may have had negative school experiences themselves. When you communicate your own uncertainty about separation, it makes it harder for kids to adjust.

  Ambivalent feelings are uncomfortable for parents, too. “When school begins,” says Balaban, “they may worry unduly about their children as a means of covering up, to themselves, their feelings of joy in their newfound freedom.”

- **Watch what you say.** If you keep repeating, “Don’t worry, you’ll be all right,” your child may assume there’s something wrong. And if you say, “I’ll miss you so much while you’re in school,” your child may feel like you don’t want to be away from them—and they might even wonder if it’s okay for them to have fun in school.

- **What you do matters too.** A good-bye ritual can help your child feel secure enough to separate from you. It can be simple: blowing kisses to each other and saying a few special words or anything that seems appropriate and fun. Rituals give kids a degree of control over the good-bye process and make it easier for them to let you go.

Just be aware that, like saying good-byes and leaving, making preschool separations easier is a process and not an event. What you do matters too. Try to keep your calendar relatively clear during the first month of the school year. Some children who manage well during the day may regress at night and need some extra time during this adjustment period.
Giving sound, sensible advice at the workplace

Many of us give advice as part of our jobs: Buy this. Try that. Those colors look great together. But giving advice to coworkers—even when they ask for it—can be tricky. If they don’t do what we suggested, it feels like we wasted our time. But if they do things don’t work out, will they blame us?

Does that make advice-giving a no-win proposition? Not necessarily. A lot depends on who’s asking. Does the person work with you? For you? How well do you know him or her?

“When someone I’m close to asks for advice, I say exactly what I’m thinking—even if it’s ‘Oh, stop whining and get on with your life’,” says Marge. “If it’s someone I don’t know as well, I try to be more diplomatic.”

What’s really being asked?

What if a coworker asks you for specific career advice?

“First, I’d try to figure out if the person truly wanted my opinion,” says Jack. “I might ask, ‘If I told you the job was not for you, would you apply anyway?’ If I really wanted to be helpful, I’d encourage the person to lay out all of his options and offer to go over them with him.”

People sometimes ask for advice in the form of a complaint: “What should I do about Albert? He hasn’t done what he promised to do and we can’t turn in our report without him.”

In this case, you might ask two questions: What have you done already? What do you think you should do?

“If the person has already taken some action, she probably just wants you to agree with what she did,” says Ben. “If she’s truly stuck for a solution, I’d try to talk it through with her.”

When people get angry at work, they often want some instant advice. For example:

“Should I tell the boss I was the one who did all the work?”

“Do not feed a coworker’s anger,” says Lenore. “You’re better off saying, ‘Think it over and let’s talk about it tomorrow.’ Chances are, whatever happened will feel less catastrophic the next day.”

If the problem is personal

If someone you work with has a personal problem, it’s tempting to offer counseling, but may not be wise. Some problems are more complex than you can handle.

“Once I told a coworker, ‘Try not to worry’, says Marie, “But that was not helpful and it may even have been harmful. I should have said, ‘This sounds serious. You need to talk to someone who is trained and qualified to help.’”

Offering unsolicited advice

Of course, the people we work with may not ask for our advice, even when they need it—and even when we are itching to give it.

“Somebody starts telling me about this great new idea,” says George, “and I want to say, ‘We tried that 10 years ago and it didn’t work.’ But people like to think they’ve come up with something new, even if they haven’t.”

Is there any way to give unsolicited advice that could be valuable but doesn’t sound negative?

“I have learned to comment in a more positive way,” George adds. “I might say something like, ‘That might work better now because some of the players have changed. But when we tried it before, we ran into these problems.’ And I try to be as specific as possible without sounding judgmental.”

Logic may not prevail

If you’re trying to get people to think about different options and make their own decisions, it’s best to offer advice in neutral language and tone of voice. But if you’re trying to persuade someone in one way or another, all too often it’s not the logic of your argument that will prevail.

As author and business coach David Maister explains, the process of giving unsolicited advice is “mostly about emotions.”

In other words, when people are asked to do something new or different, they need to feel like what’s being asked of them makes good sense and is clearly worth doing.

“You challenge, then,” says Maister, “is to create in the other person the desire for the benefits you are suggesting.”

Just be aware that it may involve a willingness to drop old habits and an understanding of why they need to operate in this new way now. In other words, you want them to see what’s in it for them.
The new thinking on healthy eating

You’ve heard it all before. Eat a healthier diet: more whole grains, vegetables, fruit, nuts, seafood, legumes. Cut back on the sugar and salt.

But longstanding dietary advice all too often gets lost in translation. Consumer Reports on Health offers these tweaks to help us look at our eating habits in a whole new light.

You’ve heard: Eat whole-grain bread, cereal and pasta.

New thinking Switching from products made with refined white flour to those made with whole grain flours is a good start. But whole grains themselves are better. Some doctors believe whole grains are tied to many health benefits, such as the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and diabetes.

Eat unprocessed whole grains such as brown rice, buckwheat, farro, millet, oats and wheat berries. Toss grains with beans and veggies. Add them to soups. Put them in muffin and cookie batter or serve them plain.

You’ve heard: Go low fat.

New thinking Opt for healthy fats like olive oil, avocados, nuts, seeds and seafood. Certain fats are beneficial, even for heart health. Try avocado as a replacement for butter or mayo on toast and sandwiches. Nuts and seeds add crunch to grain dishes. Olive and walnut oils are flavor boosters in salads and vegetables.

You’ve heard: Eat more fish.

New thinking Eat more of the right kind of fish. Oily fish like salmon, sardines, mackerel and tuna have the most omega-3 fatty acids. Be aware that white (albacore) tuna has higher mercury levels. Check the Monterey Bay Aquarium website seafoodwatch.org for lists of the best fished or farmed in ways that protect the environment.

Aim for eight ounces a week. Good choices include Atlantic mackerel, Pacific sardines, wild-caught salmon (including canned) and black cod (sablefish) from Alaska.

You’ve heard: Limit cholesterol from animal products to 300mg a day.

New thinking It’s more important to cut saturated fat than cholesterol. Setting strict limits on a high-cholesterol food like eggs means missing out on important nutrients. Eggs, shrimp and lobster do have high cholesterol but are low in saturated fat. Experts recommend getting protein from a variety of sources to maximize your nutrient intake—and those foods can be part of a healthy diet.

You’ve heard: Eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

New thinking It’s a chore counting servings. Just have some fruit or a veggie with each meal. It should take up half of your place ideally. Pick fresh fruit or unsweetened frozen fruit and dark green, red or orange vegetables. Bright colors are the result of disease-fighting plant chemicals. Legumes, such as kidney beans and lentils, count as both a vegetable and a protein.

Toss veggies into grain or pasta dishes, soups and omelets. Make smoothies with greens, berries and avocado or Greek yogurt for a little creaminess.

Take a fresh look at the benefits of celery

Granted, those claims that chewing celery would actually result in a net loss of calories turned out to be untrue. But even if munching on celery will not take inches off your waistline, that does not detract from the many benefits of this versatile vegetable.

To begin with, celery is a surprisingly satisfying crunchy snack, and it adds flavor to stews, salads and soups. A medium stalk has only 6 calories as well as small amounts of potassium, vitamin C, folate, fiber and the carotenoid lutein.

Celery does contain about 32 milligrams of sodium—which is not much, really, but more than most vegetables.

—Adapted from the UC Berkeley Wellness Letter

WFL July-August 2016 ◆ www.workandfamilylife.com
What every college-bound student needs to know

If you are the parent, grandparent or friend of a young person who’s going to college this fall, make sure she or he reads this important book. The subtitle is Students Speak Their Minds, and this book represents the collective wisdom of more than a thousand students interviewed about every aspect of college life.

Faculty from many colleges were also interviewed as part of a decade-long study directed by Dr. Richard J. Light at Harvard to determine how to improve the college experience for students.

The book is filled with practical advice such as what to consider when deciding about living arrangements, what to look for when choosing classes and instructors, how to allocate time, the best way to get helpful feedback from professors and why it’s a smart idea to get involved in outside activities.

Unlike our front-page feature aimed at the parents of college students, Dr. Light’s book speaks directly to the students themselves, and all of his advice is research-based.

He provides the rationale for the big new push in group study on campuses. He encourages freshmen to take a mix of required and elective courses to pique their interests and stimulate their imagination. Students who do this, his study found, feel more connected, confident and happier when they choose a major.

Dr. Light was surprised by some of the study’s findings. He assumed, for example, that the most memorable learning goes on in classes. But when students were asked about a critical moment or event that changed them profoundly, four out of five chose something that happened outside a classroom.

Students said they preferred courses in which there were regular quizzes and short assignments, so they could get frequent feedback and make “midcourse” corrections. Dr. Light was pleased to discover that most students also feel very positive about the impact of cultural, racial and, especially, religious diversity on college campuses.

Making the Most of College (Harvard University Press) is available in bookstores and online in hardcover, paperback and Kindle editions.

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