

Actively create Positive Interactions

Actively attempting to connect and communicate positively will allow parents to maintain a healthy relationship with students (LaFreniere & Shannon, 2021). Parents should show support for students consistently, and, combined with support from friends, students will do better in the long run than if they did not have the support (Rogers et al., 2018).



Conflict during the college transition is often related to relational uncertainty, which occurs during a significant life change. This uncertainty has many negative health impacts. Listening and showing support to students will help reduce stress and depression during their time at college (Worley & Mucci-Ferris, 2021). Notably, parent-child conflict can fall into various categories during college, but the two most notable are stable and increased. Though most students report that they experience stable conflict, which involves low levels, large amounts of conflict are harmful to a parent-child relationship (Nelson et al., 2015).



Finally, increased parent-child conflict in college increases suicide rumination in students, which is a term that includes long-term thoughts of death, suicide, and suicidal ideation (Lamis & Jahn, 2013).

Embracing Autonomy: A Key to College Success

By granting students the freedom to make decisions and taking responsibility for the outcomes through autonomy-supportive parenting, parents help students cultivate crucial life skills such as personal hygiene, problem-solving, and self-motivation (Budny et al., 2014). As a result, students' college-related stress decreases as they learn how to support themselves when away from their parents, their primary support system (Greene et al., 2019).



Conversely, helicopter parenting increases students' stress levels regarding academic, social, and financial concerns (Greene et al., 2019). Additionally, parents' effort to maintain relationships with students encourages them to seek help from family when needed (Greene et al., 2019). Thus, embracing autonomy within the parent-child dynamic ultimately strengthens the relationship and facilitates a smoother college transition.



A Guide to Navigating Parent-Child Conflict During College Transition



COLLEGE PREPARATION IMPROVES PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP & REDUCES TRANSITION UNCERTAINTY

In addition to financial, academic, and social concerns that arise during college transition, students requiring special accommodations also face health management challenges (Ersig, 2019). Thus, parents need to be aware of possible changes and help students prepare for college.

- Parents should be aware that the parent-child relationship may evolve as students desire more independence, which could intensify parent-child conflicts (Scheinfeld & Worley, 2018).
- Parents should teach students about personal hygiene and give financial management advice, while not being too controlling over students' autonomy (Budny et al., 2014).

By approaching this process intentionally, both parties will have a better understanding of each other, resulting in a smoother college transition for students, and easing parent-child conflict.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INTRUSION ON STUDENTS

During the college transition students may experience:

- Increased relational uncertainty
- Perceived interference
- Feelings of conflict

Daily parent-child interactions remain significant predictors of students' positive and negative affect. Parental interference causes students to cognitively appraise their parents' behaviors as intrusive interruptions, hindering their achievement of goals.

- For example, a student may perceive being called multiple times a day while at college a parental intrusion, as it interferes with their desire to be independent (Nelson et al., 2015; Scheinfeld & Worley, 2018).



Parental intrusion results in a variety of negative consequences for students:

- A lower likelihood that students will regularly seek out parental advice, even if they need or desire it
- Higher amounts of instability and uncertainty
- Greater levels of conflict, stress, loneliness, and, in extreme cases, suicidal thoughts

Overall, it is important for parents to find ways to support their children, without coming across as intrusive (Lamis & Jahn, 2013 and Ledbetter, 2019).

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