



Off to College

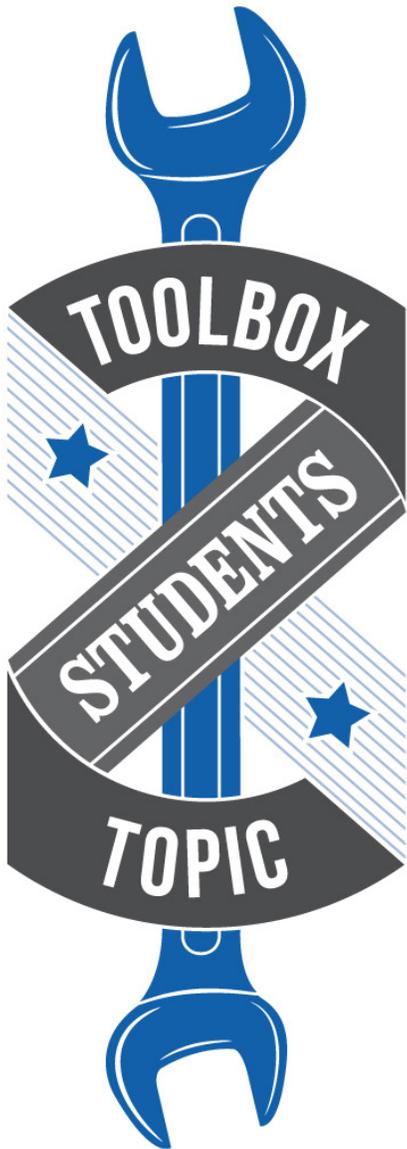


Big changes are ahead if your teenager is starting college this year. Help your teen to navigate these changes in a healthy way.

Commuter or Online Students

- **Review changes in expectations together.** What family rules are you keeping for your teen? What rules are you relaxing? You might still have expectations for a regular curfew, but your 18-year-old might have other ideas. Talk about laundry, car privileges, jobs, and daily routines. Just because your student is in college does not mean he or she is an adult. However, if you are not releasing your teen to move toward adulthood, you are missing an opportunity to make it a smooth transition.
- **Set out reasonable expectations for academic success.** Class attendance might be first on your list. Remind your student about campus services for tutors, writing centers, or other assistance.
- **Encourage your teen to be selective in committing to extracurricular activities and a heavy work schedule** until he or she knows what course work is going to look like at college.
- **Help your college student use a scheduler or calendar to be able to plan steps for completing assignments.** Usually the projects and papers are more involved and the reading requirements are heavier for college work. Give your student some tools to organize due dates and keep from getting behind. Procrastination is an enemy!
- **Have the money talk.** Your teen probably cannot afford Starbucks every morning. Make a budget, set a reasonable allowance, discuss how much your teen needs to help with the school bills, work together to set up bank accounts, and hold your student accountable for good spending decisions.
- Increased independence often leads teens to make some reckless decisions. **Strategize about ways to deal with peer pressure.**
- **This is a major transition into adulthood, so be watchful of mental health stresses that may pop up.** Anxiety and depression or any number of other mental illnesses often develop in young adulthood. Identify issues early and encourage your





college student to use campus counseling services as needed, but be conscious of differing worldviews and philosophies from secular counselors.

- **Keep the doors open for meaningful conversations.** College students face mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual challenges; your constant loving support will help your student cope with them.

Moving Out of Town for College

- **How often do you expect your college student to contact you?** Avoid the helicopter-parent role, but remind your teen that you'd like to hear from him even when he doesn't need money.
- **Your teen does not need to invest big money in dorm furnishings.** You may purchase only basic necessities at first. Suggest talking with the roommate and delaying some purchases until after it is clear what your student really needs.
- **Be clear about holiday plans** and help your student navigate her schedule at school and work to be able to participate.
- **Be sure your student knows how to do laundry, pump gas, and balance a checking account.** Help him or her be equipped to be more independent.
- **Talk about the danger of gaining weight with cafeteria food.** Yes, there may be a pizza bar and ice cream at every meal. That doesn't mean your teen should eat it at every meal. A balanced diet and a regular meal schedule will help avoid weight gain.
- **Talk about church expectations** and help to hold your teen accountable for regular church attendance.
- **Old fashioned care packages are still a great way to say, "I care."**
- **Pray, pray, pray that the Lord will give your son or daughter good and godly friends** who will help to support faith instead of tearing it down.