Seasonal Student Issues

There’s a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- Missing friends at school and feeling like it’ll be a long time until they see them again
- Transitioning back to life at home after being away all year (for students who go away to school)
- Adjusting to a new routine
- Working full-time instead of going to school full-time
- Anxiety about academics – feeling like they have a lot of ground to make up if they did poorly last semester
- Handling summer classes
- Reestablishing relationships with siblings, parents and friends
- Budgeting their money and saving for fall
- Looking toward next term and the changes that may occur

Connecting with Your Student This Summer

Whether you’re in the same place or living apart, there are some simple ways to stay connected with your student this summer…

- Suggest that you both read the same book so you can discuss it
- Take quick videos with your phone and send them to each other, as a way to share something about your day
- Go to a movie that your student has seen so you can compare notes
- Meet halfway to spend some time together, whether it’s for lunch, a hike or a chat
- Swap photos of your individual summer adventures using Instagram – a picture often speaks volumes!
- Volunteer together for a worthy cause, whether it’s distributing water at a local 5K run or helping in a community garden

Summer Conversations

You can also connect with your student through good, meaningful conversation! Topics might include things like…

- What classes your student is most looking forward to next term – and why
- The thing(s) she’s glad she got involved in this year
- Goals for next term, from applying for a campus job to an academic goal to trying out for a leadership position
- What classes you’d like to take if you were in college – and why
- How his friends are spending the summer
- The faculty or staff member your student was most inspired by
- What she’d suggest to family or friends going to college, now that she has some experience
- What she’s really looking forward to in the coming year

These connections – and beyond – can help you and your student feel like you’re making the very most of your summer.
It’s Orientation Season

If you’re preparing to visit campus for an orientation session, here are a few things to keep in mind…

Prep Questions Ahead of Time
- What’s important to you and your student?
- Consider: housing, parking, career prep, learning assistance, commuter concerns, internships, classroom expectations and more

Combine Asking Questions & Listening
- Take notes – the sheer volume of information you are offered can make remembering everything difficult
- Listen to presenters and panels, yet ask questions when they come up
- Keep in mind that NO question is a dumb one!

Give Your Student Some Space
- It’s important for her to learn to navigate on her own
- Allows him to meet other people and ask his own questions
- A dose of self-responsibility at orientation sets a positive tone for the year ahead!

Get to Know Others
- Don’t hesitate to introduce yourself to coaches, student affairs staff, advisors, student leaders, faculty, staff and others
- Also mingle with other parents

Make the Rounds
- Take tours around campus to see academic buildings, residence halls, community spaces and more
- Then, when your student starts talking about these places during the semester, you’ll be able to accurately picture her in her surroundings!

Be Paperwork–Prepared
- Do the legwork ahead of time so you’re ready with necessary health, academic and other info that may be needed
- Talk with your student so you can both compare notes about what’s needed during orientation
- Here’s to a positive orientation experience for all!

Questions to Consider

Commuter Concerns. What meal plans are available for commuters? How can they get involved in campus life, even though they don’t live there? What is the parking situation like?

Residence Hall Life. What are students allowed to bring and what is against policy? Do the mattresses require extra long sheets? What staff members are available in the halls?

Academics. What services are available to students with learning disabilities? How do professors’ office hours work? If a student is feeling behind, what can he/she do?

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Determine what is important to YOU.

Making the Most of Opportunities

Many students may not get their “dream job” right away. Yet, there are ways to make the most of this time, to prepare for that great opportunity which may be on the horizon, that you can encourage your student to try…

- Volunteer – Get some experience, network and make a difference
- Intern – Even if it’s 5 hours a week while you hold down a full-time job, it’s a great way to get valuable experience in a field that interests you
- Job Shadow – Ask if you can spend the day “shadowing” someone in a job that interests you – it’s one of the best ways to learn the nitty-gritty details
- Chamber of Commerce – See if your local Chamber has a leadership class or networking group that you can participate in
- Get Out in the Community – Showcase your talents and people skills by being part of your community – you never know who might have a great opportunity, just waiting!
Test-taking Tips: Placement Tests and Beyond

Your student may be taking placement tests during orientation to determine her eligibility for certain classes. Here are some tips you can share with her to help the process go well...

**Take Them Seriously.** Your slate of possible classes will increase if you do well on placement exams, so do your best and take them seriously.

**Study and Review.** This type of refresher – particularly in academic areas you haven’t focused on in some time – may help improve your placement results.

**Get Good Sleep.** Your mind functions most effectively when it’s well-rested, so make good sleep the night before exams a priority.

**Eat a Little Something.** No need to have your stomach growling – and distracting you – when you’re taking a test. Have a healthy snack so you can focus and function to the best of your ability.

**Understand the Directions.** If you’re not sure what to do for each test, ask questions.

**Work Carefully.** Read questions with care, consider all the steps and check answers before submitting them. This can keep careless mistakes at bay.

**Make Your Best Guess.** If you’re unsure how to answer a question, try to eliminate as many incorrect answer choices as possible and then make a guess from the remaining choices.

**Be on Time.** Get to the testing location in plenty of time. There’s no need to hurry and worry – this stress can impact how you do. Ask questions if you’re not sure where to go so you can arrive calmly, get used to your surroundings and be ready to go!


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Summer Money Conversations

Textbooks, tuition, housing… As you and your student plan ahead for the upcoming academic year, some questions can help you get on the same page when it comes to key money topics:

**The Biggies.** What are the “big ticket” items to consider when budgeting? Consider things like tuition, room, board, etc.

**Travel.** How much will travel cost this year? Consider gas and car insurance costs, the estimated number of weekends residential students will travel home or elsewhere, if the student is job searching this year and needing to go on interviews, etc.

**Incoming Funds.** What money will be coming in? Consider scholarships, grants, work-study and other jobs.

**Little Things.** What are the estimated costs for those “little things” that can quickly add up? Consider laundry, school supplies, entertainment, conference attendance, postage, clothing, toiletries, parking fees, equipment costs and more.

**Cutbacks.** Where can your student cut back this year? Maybe she can consider riding a bike and using public transportation instead of having a car, vowing to order out only once a month, etc.

By talking about things now, you and your student can be on the same money page once the upcoming academic year arrives.
Encouraging People Variety

On campus, your student likely interacts with peers much of the time. This doesn’t always allow for a lot of variety when it comes to meeting people of different ages. So, encourage your student to seek out some people variety this summer, as a way to broaden his horizons and develop intergenerational skills.

Some ways to do this include…

- **Teach a Class at the Senior Center.** Your student can volunteer to lead a computer class, teach a crafting technique or show participants how to improve their tennis strokes.

- **Offer Parents’ Night Out.** By providing a night of babysitting, your student will get some valuable kiddo time while helping those parents get time to themselves.

- **Spend Time with Grandparents.** If your student is lucky enough to have grandparents or older friends of the family in her life, encourage her to spend time with them. They can go out to lunch, look through photo albums, play golf, go on walks, cook together and more. It’s precious time.

- **Provide an Afternoon of Activities.** Perhaps your student and a few friends can offer an afternoon of kid-friendly activities at a local park or the backyard. Invite friends with kids to come partake of things like suitcase races, wiffle ball, orienteering, ring-toss, water balloons and more. They’ll be giving participants some variety in those long summer days with the kids at home.

- **Have an Intergenerational Shindig.** Kids and older adults can benefit from spending time together, so maybe your student can invite a cross-section of family and friends to an intergenerational party. Have activities that pair up young and old, like board games, scavenger hunts and making fairy gardens.

   Experiencing people variety can help your student branch out to a wider world.

Flexibility: An Important Tool

How can flexibility help in your relationship with your student?

- **It Helps You See Her Choices.** Rather than imposing your choices, being flexible and taking note of what your student chooses can help you learn more about her. This might involve something as small as choosing a comforter or something bigger, such as registering for a class that interests her greatly.

- **It Communicates Trust.** Being flexible enough to let your student makes these choices communicates a certain level of trust that can be invaluable.

- **It Lets Students Learn from Mistakes & Successes.** Although it can be hard to watch your student stumble, it’s important that he have the opportunity to learn from his missteps. Being flexible allows this type of learning to happen.

- **It Can Help You See Things Through a Different Filter.** When we display flexibility – of thought and actions – it can really open us up to some different experiences, too. For instance, if your student is arguing a certain point, being flexible enough to look at it from her perspective can be very enlightening.

   Flexibility is an important tool as you continue developing an adult relationship with your student. When both people bend a bit, it can form a stronger bond of trust and mutual respect.