



a newsletter for parents & families



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Having Meaningful Summer Conversations

This summer, you and your student may be in the same place or living apart. No matter the circumstances, you can still connect with your student through good, meaningful conversation!

It's almost like having a "debriefing session," now that the term is over. Reflecting on past experiences while also looking ahead can help your student make the most of the summer months and prepare for what's to come.

Conversation topics might include things like...

- What classes your student is most looking forward to next term – and why
- How he's thinking about arranging his living space to make it more fun and effective



- The thing(s) she's glad she got involved in this year – and why
- Ways you can both be more environmentally conscious
- What classes you'd like to take if you were in college – and why
- The faculty or staff member your student was most inspired by – and why
- What she'd suggest to family or friends going to college, now that she has some experience under her belt
- How his friends are spending the summer
- Places around school that he'd like to explore, from apple orchards to hiking trails
- What she's really looking forward to in the coming year

Consider Asking...

What are your goals for next term?

This might include anything from applying for a campus job to an academic goal to trying out for a leadership position. If your student can focus on 2-3 concrete goals for the term ahead, with some action steps to help get there, he or she will definitely be ahead of the game!



These connections – and beyond – can help you and your student feel like you're making the very most of your summer.



Student Budgeting

As students look to the fall, when school starts up, it's important for them to have basic budgeting skills in their back pocket. They'll be less likely to overspend and more likely to start smart financial practices that can last for a lifetime.

Here are some strategies to share with your student...

Income & Savings vs. Expenses

Setting up monthly budgets for yourself will help keep your spending in check.

- First, determine what fixed expenses you have
- Then, see how much you have and need in savings and earnings
- After that, you can decide how to spend your limited discretionary funds so you don't get into trouble by overreaching – and getting into debt

Wants vs. Needs

Distinguishing between “wants” and “needs” is an important skill to learn. Look at your spending habits

and identify which of the things you've spent money on in the past month – and which of the things you're considering spending money on soon – are “wants” and which are “needs.”

To help you do that, make a list, then put an “N” next to your actual “needs” and a “W” next to those that are “wants.” For example:

- Textbooks = a need (N)
- A college sweatshirt = a want (W)
- A cup of coffee may feel like a need, yet a latte or fancy coffee drink definitely equals a want (W)

Getting in the habit of seeing potential purchases through this lens will help you establish good lifelong spending practices. However, that doesn't mean you can't splurge occasionally. In fact, it can make those occasional treats more fun, knowing you've saved up for and earned them!

Source: From PaperClip's “Managing Student Debt” Brochure, 2017

Costs to Consider When Planning a College Budget

- Tuition & fees
- Room and board or rent and housing
- Textbooks and course supplies
- Laptop/tablet
- Childcare so you can go to class (for students with children)
- Transportation
- Cell phone/plan
- Personal products, haircuts, other services
- Clothing
- Laundry
- Furniture, room decorations
- Groceries, eating out
- Entertainment
- Membership fees

Seasonal 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 term
- Reestablishing relationships with siblings, parents and friends





Handling Missteps and Mistakes

We all make mistakes. Some are small while others are more major. Whatever the case may be, handling mistakes and missteps with integrity is an important skill for students to learn.

Some key tips to share include...

Admit When You're Wrong. It takes strong character to say, "I was wrong." It may feel uncomfortable at the time, yet most folks are bound to respect you for it. Admitting when you're wrong not only demonstrates human fallibility, it admits a willingness to hold yourself to certain standards.

Apologize for Any Harm. If you inadvertently offended someone or did them harm somehow through your misstep, be very upfront and apologize. You can't take away what you did, yet your genuine remorse and desire to mend fences can make a big difference.

Don't Pass the Buck. Some people misplace blame to make themselves look better. In the moment, it may feel good, yet it won't feel right in the long run. And people are very perceptive to

Learning from Mistakes

Most people clearly remember the mistakes they made and what they learned from the experience. And you can help students learn a great deal by encouraging them to...

- Recognize that the impact of something always carries more weight than the intent
- Accept that all feelings surrounding the misstep are valid
- Think about what can be done to address the concern/mistake
- Try not to get defensive
- Not shy away from difficult subjects in the future, just because they're afraid to make a misstep
- Embrace mistakes and learn how not to repeat them
- Refuse to turn around and assign blame
- Acknowledge that missteps are part of being human
- Not let one criticism taint all the positive things they do

this kind of thing. They'll likely be able to sense when you're trying to build yourself up at the expense of others.

People who learn to handle mistakes on their own, face the music and

work to make things right develop resilience and deepen their character. You can help your student turn those missteps into valuable learning opportunities!

Career Tip: Develop a New Skill

As your student settles into summer, encourage him to develop a new job skill that could make him more employable. This is the perfect time to learn!

Skills might include...

- **Computer-based Skills** – such as getting more comfortable with PowerPoint, Prezi or Excel
- **Communication Skills** – such as active listening, speaking in front of groups or improved writing
- **People Skills** – such as emotional intelligence, looking people in the eye or asking engaging questions
- **Organizational Skills** – such as juggling multiple tasks, keeping a work/life balance or using a calendar system to stay on track
- **Critical Thinking Skills** – such as how to articulate an opinion, how to discuss something from the news or how to make an effective argument





Fears Students Face in Becoming Their True Selves

We are all works in progress – facing societal, peer, family and other pressures to behave in certain ways that they think we “should.” Students sometimes face barriers that can tie them up in knots about how to act when it comes to expressing opinions and disagreeing with others.

You can help them overcome these fears as they work to become the most authentic versions of themselves. The first thing is better understanding some of the things that may be going through their minds as they determine how and when to speak out...

A Fear of Being Hated. Hardly anyone truly wants to be the subject of hatred. Yet, individuals who take the chance to state an opinion that others may not agree with can be subjected to hateful backlash.

Being Put on the Spot. Just because someone has an opinion, it doesn't mean she should be expected to speak for all women or all people of her cultural group, etc.

Threats of Physical Harm.

Expressing an unpopular opinion could lead to physical harm. Students need to know about the multiple resources available on campus to help them feel safe.



Publicly Expressing an Unpopular View. It takes strength to go against the grain and express an opinion that may not be popular. For example, on a predominantly liberal-minded campus, expressing a conservative viewpoint may be met with incredulity, snark and, potentially, worse.

Anonymous Comments Online.

It's so easy for people to slander, label and threaten others online, due to anonymity and not fully considering the consequences. Individuals who put themselves – and their opinions – out into cyberspace may face online cruelty.

Going Against Group Expectations. Certain groups may expect community solidarity. So, for instance, a gay man who doesn't express outrage when transgender people aren't allowed to use restrooms that match their gender identity could be outcast. “You're not one of us,” they may be told, being labeled as traitorous or uncaring. And group identification can be a very potent motivator.

So, as students work to become the best versions of themselves and learn to make their voices be heard, you can help them face their fears and determine next steps. And please remind them of the many support resources available on campus, too. We're here to help!

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 as you listen to presenters and panels, yet ask questions when they come up. And 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, meet other people and ask her 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/families who are going through the same thing that you are

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