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## How to Encourage Independence in a College-Bound Graduate

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For many teenagers, college is the first chance to experience real independence – and all of the responsibility that comes with it. If you're the parent of a student getting ready to make this transition, taking some steps now can help ease the adjustment in September. Here's how to encourage your child's independence this summer.

### Discuss spending habits



This is also a good time to go over other financial basics, such as responsible use of a credit card and debt management. If your child is using student loans to pay for school, have them start thinking about repayment plans and if they will make payments during school.

### **Hand over personal care tasks**

Stop doing your child's laundry, waking them up in the morning, and replenishing supplies like toothpaste and toilet paper. Have your child start scheduling appointments on her own. If issues arise around scheduling college courses, resist the urge to solve the problem for your child; instead, guide them to figure out how they can correct it themselves.

Let your child learn how to handle these responsibilities now so they can make mistakes or ask questions when you're there to help, rather than when they're on their own away at school.

### **Be okay with seeing less of your child**

Teenagers often want to spend a lot of time with their friends before leaving for college. While it can be tempting to put parameters on your kid's social life, now is actually a good time to start letting up. Trust them to make good decisions. After all, that's what they'll need to do next year.

### **Set expectations**

Spend some time speaking frankly about what you expect of your child when they go off to school. In addition to academics and finances, you'll also want to talk about how you'll communicate throughout the year. Though you may want to video chat your student every day, you may have better luck getting responses with text messages and occasional phone calls. These plans will likely change over the next four years, but talking about them in advance may prevent unnecessary stress or conflict later.

### **Let them know you're always there**

Even as you encourage more responsibility, let your child know that you're still there to help. They'll have more confidence spreading their wings knowing that if they run into any problems – from forgetting which setting to wash their jeans on, to dealing with academic or social pressures o





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