



GEAR UP Tips for Families



You have prepared for this! Both you and your student are ready! Here are a few tips and reminders that this is a transition for you all. Don't forget about yourself and make your own plans for what you're going to spend time doing when your young adult is ready to launch!

getting ready for college

- ☐ Make sure you **apply for Vermont State Grant** by logging into **MyVSAC** after you apply for the FAFSA. The grant can only be applied for after completing the FAFSA.
- ☐ Get ready to help your student **contact financial aid** by phone to get clarity on your bill, what you owe, and make sure it's accurate. Some aid won't show up right away - so you may have to check back a few times.
- ☐ **Keep up with college communications!** Remind them to check their college email and if they can't access it, contact the IT Help Desk at their school.
- ☐ Encourage your child attend an **orientation or summer bridge program** (often an overnight or two before the semester starts) to meet people, learn about campus and start to get familiar.
- ☐ Encourage learning or improving on skills: cooking, general car repair, laundry, budgeting, scheduling appointments, you know, **living on your own skills**
- ☐ **Anticipate new expenses:** living on campus vs. home, travel, parking, food, etc. It may help to show them how to make a monthly budget.
- ☐ Set new expectations: whether at home or on campus, offer space to grow and adjust. Some past expectations may not fit anymore. **Determine what works for all of you ahead of time.**
- ☐ **On Campus:** check the housing list; roommate selections can be stressful, take a chance on meeting someone new! Encourage coordination between roommates on what to bring; prepare for the upcoming season with clothing; personal hygiene items; needs vs. wants. **Resist the urge to complete documents for your student.**
- ☐ **Off Campus at home:** let student create school work space set-up - offer support if needed; remember school schedule is not the same as home or HS; help create work/life balance.
- ☐ Review any scheduled appointments during the semester and **help them shift** to making and changing their own: now that's a good skill! Dentist, car, Dr., etc.
- ☐ Help them grow independence and support the transition: **listen to what your student needs** for support. They are ready - you've prepared them well for this transition and your continued encouragement is important. Stay involved and take your cues from them. **Guide as needed!**





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more thoughts to share

- Help them **identify the supports** they might need on campus or in their new town/city and help them write an email or call that person to make contact.
- **Listen to their concerns.** What will help them feel more confident going into their first semester. **Resist the urge to “fix” things** but listen, encourage, and offer advice if you feel it is helpful.
- **Give them a little time to adjust.** Be there for them but allow them time to warm up to their new surroundings. These transitions typically take at least two weeks. Remind them they prepared for this. It's a hard but worthy transition.
- Encourage them to **meet people**; join an intramural, a campus club, and attend social events. Ask them about classes, roommates, professors, activities, food, and how they spend their time.
- **Send a letter, a welcome package** that could include something from home like a favorite baked good (give them a head's up on that one so they'll check their mailbox!). There are a lot of delivery opportunities for something close to them as well.
- Parents can often find a school/class based social media platform to connect with other families of students. Often times a lot of **helpful information is exchanged**, like travel plans, course opportunities, and others - and is monitored by someone from the school so you get accurate updates.
- **Leave notes of love and encouragement** for them to find when they unpack or take out that favorite hoodie. Send one by mail, text, or call once in a while.
- Remind them that you miss them and **you are so proud of them** for taking this step, however, you are doing okay while they are learning new things. This is what we all work toward!
- Agree upon a **fair amount of time between texts** and responding to texts - what is comfortable for you all?
- Don't forget about your own adjustment. Think about **what you are going to do** when your student has moved to campus. Think about starting or continuing:
 - new interests and hobbies
 - walking, running, yoga, etc.
 - creative outlets like learning to paint, draw, play or perform music, or a new language
- Remember, this is **an adjustment for everyone**. It's all new even if this isn't your first family member going off to college. Remember, time, patience, and support.

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