

The summer is a crucial time to have conversations as a family. These short months are essential, and communication is key.

Here are 5 Conversations to have as a family during June & July ahead of enrolling in your first semester of College classes.

Finances

One of the biggest stressors of going to college can be finances. So have a conversation as a family about money.

- Has you received and accepted their financial aid package?
- Are there any tasks pending?
- Do you have a balance owed for your first semester?
- Does the financial aid package exceed the cost of attendance? Will you receive a refund? If you get a refund what will you be using those funds for?

Family Project:

Help your Graduate make a monthly budget for their first semester in college. Include what financial support sources: family support, financial aid, employment, etc.

Orientation and Registration

Alumni, ensure you complete the College's To-Do List for registration. Parents, ask if your Graduate completed all of the tasks necessary to be able to attend the First Day of Classes.

- Are you registered for and attended registration?
- Have you met with an academic advisor?
- Have you registered for your classes?
- Has the college received your Graduate's final high school transcripts?
- For most colleges, vaccination records are required as part of the registration process. Not submitting records can create a hold on their account. Do they have their meningitis shot? Does their college require a COVID-19 vaccine? Etc.

Family Project:

Create a countdown calendar for Day 1 for the whole family to know important dates.

Traveling to and Learning on Campus

College campuses can be complicated hard to navigate at first. The experience is different for students living on campus vs. commuting.

For those living on campus

- Has you registered for housing?
- Does you have a meal plan? How many meals can a student eat on campus each week with that meal plan? Where will you get your other meals?
- If you are bringing your car, do they have a parking permit?
- **If the College is not in Houston**, how will you get there? Drive, Fly, Bus, Train?
- Will someone in your family be traveling with you when you move to College?
- What is your class schedule? Do you know where your classes are?

For those commuting

- Does you have a meal plan? How many meals can a student eat on campus each week with that meal plan? Where will you get your other meals?
- How are you getting to school each day? Drive, public transit, rides from family members?
- Will someone in the family have to provide transportation?
- If you are driving, do you know where to park on day 1? Do you have to pay for parking? Do you have to have a parking permit? How do you purchase it?
- What is your class schedule? Do you know where their classes are?

Family Project:

Take a walking tour of the campus as a family to see where buildings, parking, and important places on campus are located before the first day of class. If you can't visit campus as a family, do a virtual tour, or explore campus using Google Street View.

Technology

Today more than ever, technology is part of the college experience. Colleges also use different systems, including emails, student portals, and other methods to communicate with students and families.

- Have you activated your college email? Are you checking the email frequently for information, next steps, and important deadlines?
- Do you have access to a laptop or computer for your college classes?
- If you do not have access, what services are available through the college?
- Have you signed up for updates on the Colleges Social Media?
- Have you as a family looked into the College Family communication system, family association, and/or signed up for any family newsletters, portals, etc.

Family Project:

Create a weekly check-in where you go through the latest news from the college. A weekly check-in will ensure your Graduate is checking their new College Email. In addition, you as a family can share any updates you received from family communications.

Talk About College

Families, allow for a space for your Graduate to talk about college in general.

- What are you excited about?
- What makes you nervous?
- How can your family best support you?
- What are some expectations you have of each other during this journey?
- If the student is going to college outside of Houston, when is the first time they will come home?

Family Project:

Establish a family communication plan for the first six weeks of College. The first six weeks of college can be a foundation for the rest of a students Freshmen year, including the first opportunity to join groups, make connections, while also getting their first college grades. Have a plan for how as a family you will touch base about how the graduate is doing, whether they are going away to college, or commuting. Schedule a weekly touchpoint to have a conversation about how they are doing.

The next month is an exciting yet busy time. The key to success will be communication.
So enjoy the ride as a family!

Students if you need support from YES Prep contact alumni@yesprep.org.