

Welcome Parents!

On behalf of all staff members from the Office of Residence Life, welcome to the Pitt family! It has been a long road leading to this point in time, but all of the sacrifices and hard work have paid off. As you may know, making a transition to college can be challenging for students and parents alike. While students are adjusting to being on their own, developing their individual identity and preparing for their future careers, parents are going through adjustment issues of their own. In addition, parents are often concerned with a variety of issues including the safety, well-being and success of their children.

If you are like many parents, you may have a number of questions related to your new role of parent of a first year college student. This handbook is a resource to assist you in answering some questions, but may also spark additional ones. We hope that this guide will serve as a reference and resource to assist you in helping your child through their transition to college and beyond. Please know that we see ourselves as a partner in the success of our students. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns related to your child and their residential experience.

Sincerely,

Shawn E. Brooks, Ph.D.
Associate Dean of Students and Director of Residence Life
University of Pittsburgh

Residence Life Staff University of Pittsburgh

The Office of Residence Life at the University of Pittsburgh exists to provide a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable student-centered learning environment that supports the academic mission of the university, encourages student growth by supporting and challenging residents' exploration of personal development and promotes civic responsibility.

The Office of Residence Life includes a director, two assistant directors, ten resident directors, and over one hundred and thirty resident assistants. Each serves a unique role within the department to enhance your student's living experience.

Resident Directors are full-time professionals with advanced degrees and years of experience working with college students in residence halls. They are responsible for the overall management and day to day operations of the residence hall. Resident directors mentor and directly supervise the resident assistants, providing feedback and support. Along with the resident assistants, resident directors seek to establish welcoming, secure living areas by representing and promoting high standards of achievement and conduct expected of students at the University of Pittsburgh.

Resident Assistants are students dedicated and trained for one of the most esteemed student leadership positions on campus. They live within a floor community and serve as a campus resource, programmer, crisis responder, policy enforcer, active listener, and academic role model. Resident Assistants seek to establish a strong, pro-active community that uses an open dialogue when sharing ideas or settling disagreements.

The residence life staff is ready and willing to assist you and your student. We can be most helpful when the lines of communication are open – both between you and your student and between your student and the residence life staff. It is important for your student to know their resident assistant and feel comfortable going to them if a problem should arise within the floor community. Resident assistants, along with the resident directors are equipped to handle conflicts and disagreements and will make every effort to remedy such situations. Our hope is that your student will take advantage of the resources, programs, and spontaneous fun provided within the residence hall environment.

What is the Difference between Housing and Residence Life?

Housing and Residence Life are separate entities at the University of Pittsburgh. Residence Life is a department in the Division of Student Affairs, while Housing falls under the Budget and Controller Office. Housing is responsible for the physical maintenance of the buildings, rooms, and facilities, as well as room assignments. Residence Life is responsible for the students housed within the buildings, their behaviors, interactions, and overall residential experience.

Department
of
Residence Life
Staff
2008-2009

Associate Dean of Students and Director of Residence Life
Dr. Shawn Brooks

Assistant Directors of Residence Life
Dr. Karin Asher Kathleen Kyle

Resident Directors

Samantha Comarnitsky	Holland Hall
Richard Fann	Sutherland Hall
Kate Faunce	Forbes Hall
Dean Jolin	Panther Hall
Lauren Merclean	Tower B
Haylee Shacklock	Pennsylvania Hall
Melissa Warthen	Tower A
Robert Wilson	Tower C

Assistant Resident Director

Tiffanie Spencer Sutherland Hall

First Year Experience Graduate Assistants

Dawna Jones	Tower B
Jo Novacky	Tower A

Residence Life Office Staff

Lindsay Hartwig
Cyndi Lynch
Rosey Natale
Katie Peters

FAQ's about living in the Residence Halls:

Much of the information provided in this section is relevant to both the department of Residence Life and the department of Housing.

What furniture/appliances are provided?

The University provides each resident student with a twin-sized bed, mattress, desk, chair, dresser, wardrobe or closet. Rooms are also equipped with a telephone as well as window curtains or blinds. Desk lamps and bed linens are not provided by the University. There is also a vacuum cleaner usually available at the security desk. Micro-fridges are available to rent @ [The Melvin Group](#) or by calling 1-877-870-6098.

What amenities are provided?

All residence hall rooms have an internet connection for every each student and basic cable. Telephone service with voicemail, and free calls to the 412, and 724 area codes are also provided. There are laundry facilities located in every residence hall, and a corresponding fitness center is often located within the residence hall itself, and always within walking distance. Several of the residence halls offer a variety of other convenient services and amenities, including recreational facilities, computer centers, e-mail kiosks, coffee stands, and dining facilities. For more information on amenities please visit the housing website at <http://www.pc.pitt.edu/housing/>

What items are prohibited in the Residence Halls?

- Toasters and toaster ovens
- Hot plates
- Cup warmers
- Gas grills
- Indoor grills (including Foreman type grills)
- Steamers
- Open-flame cooking devices or heating units
- Space heaters
- Air conditioners
- Halogen or high intensity quartz light fixtures (touchier)
- Extension cords (power strips with surge protectors are acceptable)
- Candles, incense, or any item that produces smoke or open flame
- Pets (**ONLY** fish are acceptable)
- Homemade or commercially made furniture (loft beds, desks, or dressers...)
- Waterbeds
- External radio/TV aerials
- Controlled substances
- Firecrackers
- Ammunition
- Firearms or any other weapons (including paintball, pellet guns, slingshots, blowguns, hunting knives, swords, throwing stars ...etc)
- Objects that hang from/interfere with fire safety equipment

What if something is missing, broken, or damaged in a room?

Students are given a *Room Condition Report* upon arrival to the university. It is imperative that they take the time to fill it out completely, as residents will be charged for any damage not explicitly listed on the room condition report. Resident Assistants will collect the *Room Condition Reports* during the first week of the semester. The students then have the opportunity to discuss any and all maintenance concerns. It should also be noted that residents are responsible for common area billing. This would include damage to floor or building lounges and hallways. Subsequent maintenance requests may be completed online at www.pc.pitt.edu/housing/maintenance.html

Is air conditioning provided?

Air conditioning is provided in the following halls: Tower A, B, and C; Forbes; Sutherland, Pennsylvania, and Panther. Air conditioning is not a standard amenity in Bruce Hall, Brackenridge Hall, McCormick Hall, Holland Hall, Amos Hall, and Lothrop Hall. However, some rooms do have individual air conditioning units because of window obstruction or poor air flow. If a student has a medical restriction requiring air conditioning, they are recommended to contact Disability Resources and Services at 412-648-7890 for special accommodations. Under no circumstances are personal air conditioning units allowed.

What is the size of the room, windows?

Room and window sizes differ by residence hall and room. For more specific information please look at information regarding specific residence halls on the Panther Central website: <http://www.pc.pitt.edu/>.

What is the Room Change Policy?

Students may change rooms, if space is available, and with the permission of Residence Life after the 2nd week of the semester when the “room change period” begins. Residents must fill out a room change request form, and speak with their Resident Assistant to discuss the reason for their request. Please note that availability is often limited, and that non-emergency room changes do not always take place. For more specific information, please see section on roommate conflicts on page 16.

What happens if a policy is violated?

If a resident violates a residence hall or student code of conduct policy, they will be directed to contact a judicial administrator ranging from a Resident Director, to the Assistant Dean of Students, to schedule an educational conference (judicial hearing). At this hearing, students are made aware of their rights, and are given an opportunity to present their information and provide a plea. Based on the meeting residents may, or may not receive sanctions and/or educational directives. Students then have the option to accept responsibility (if applicable) or file an appeal. For more information please see <http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/usjs/>

What happens if a student loses their ID?

For a student's security, they should report lost or stolen ID cards to Panther Central immediately by calling 412 648-1100 or stopping by the main office in the Towers lobby. The lost card will be deactivated, and a replacement card will be issued at a charge of \$20.

What happens if students' personal belongings are stolen or damaged in a Residence Hall room?

The University is not liable for lost, stolen, or damaged personal belongings. It is suggested that resident students check to see if their property is covered by a homeowner's or renter's insurance policy, and if not, the possibility of getting such coverage should be investigated. We suggest that residents keep their doors locked at all times to avoid theft or security risks.

What if a student needs to arrive early or stay late when the university is closed?

Please ensure that resident is aware of the housing calendar for the academic year. All relevant dates can be found at: <http://www.pitt.edu/calendars.html>

Are students allowed underage guests?

Guests without photo identification or guests under 16 years of age may be permitted in the residence halls with permission of Residence Life, and their parents/guardians. A guest pass may be issued upon contact of the parent/guardian of the guest. A guest pass is a privilege and may not be issued in particular situations. If advance planning for a visit has been made, please contact Residence Life prior to arrival for permission and information.

How does the fire alarm system work?

The residence halls have a "zone alarm" fire alarm system. Under a "zone alarm" system, only specific floors hear an alarm and are evacuated - the affected floor (source of the alarm), the floor directly above, and the floor directly below. The stairwell fire alarm will also trigger any time a floor alarm is activated. All alarms and all floors will sound in the event of a true fire emergency or when sprinkler head is activated.

If you have any other questions specific to Residence Life, please feel free to contact Residence Life at 412 648-1200

For Housing specific questions please contact 412 648-1100

Programming

Residence Life has a strong commitment to programming within the residence hall communities. Programming is typically planned, organized, and presented by Resident Assistants either for the entire building or for a specific floor community. While many programs are intended to be social, some programs are developed to toward specific learning outcomes. Residence Life believes in the education of the whole student and to that end, we work to enhance the education being provided within the classroom with educational opportunities in the residence halls. Encourage your student to seek out and attend programs within their building.

Resident Student Association

The Resident Student Association (RSA) allows for an opportunity for all resident students to have their voice heard on issues that matter to them. Each residence hall has an individual executive board and general membership that serves as a liaison to resident students in University matters. All resident students are encouraged to attend and to be active in their hall government.

Students with Disabilities

If students have a disability for which they may be requesting an accommodation, they are encouraged to contact their instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term.

Disability Resources and Services reviews documentation related to a student's disability, provides verification of the disability, and recommends reasonable accommodations for specific courses.

The Pitt Promise: A Commitment to Civility

During Freshman Convocation, we ask all of our students to recite The Pitt Promise. It is an oath that we expect our students to follow in order to gain that maximum benefits during their time here at the University of Pittsburgh. You will find it below:

The University of Pittsburgh is committed to the advancement of learning and service to society. This is best accomplished in an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility, self-restraint, concern for others, and academic integrity. By choosing to join this community, I accept the obligation to live by these common values and commit myself to the following principles:

As a Pitt Student:

- ◆ I will embrace the concept of a civil community which abhors violence, theft and exploitation of others;
- ◆ I will commit myself to the pursuit of knowledge with personal integrity and academic honesty;
- ◆ I will respect the sanctity of the learning environment and avoid disruptive and deceitful behavior toward other members of the campus community;
- ◆ I will support a culture of diversity by respecting the rights of those who differ from myself;
- ◆ I will contribute to the development of a caring community where compassion for others and freedom of thought and expression are valued; and
- ◆ I will honor, challenge and contribute to the scholarly heritage left by those who preceded me and work to leave this a better place for those who follow.

By endorsing these common principles, I accept a moral obligation to behave in ways that contribute to a civil campus environment and resolve to support this behavior in others. This commitment to civility is my promise to the University of Pittsburgh and its community of scholars.

Rights of Students

According to:

With the approval of the Board of Trustees, the University affirms the following student rights and privileges:

- ◆ To engage in discussion, to make inquiries, to exchange thought and opinion, to publish and exchange findings and recommendations, to speak, write, or print freely on any subject, and to sponsor speakers of their choice, in accordance with the guarantees of our Federal and State Constitutions, subject only to the right of the University to make reasonable rules and regulations related thereto.
- ◆ To associate with whomsoever they please.
- ◆ To engage in the educational process.
- ◆ To engage in peaceful, orderly, and nondestructive picketing, protests, and demonstrations, to the extent they do not violate public law and do not interfere with the educational process or the rights of other members of the University.
- ◆ To be free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or marital, veteran, or handicapped status.
- ◆ To be secure in their persons, living quarters, papers, and effects from unreasonable, illegal, or unauthorized searches and seizures; and in the event of a legally authorized search, whenever possible to have present an official of the University and the student against whom the legally authorized search is directed.
- ◆ To be free from violence, force, the threat of force entrapment, and coercion.
- ◆ To organize one's own personal behavior as long as such behavior does not violate public law or the rights of others and does not interfere with the educational process.
- ◆ To be informed of the standards and the norms of conduct established by the University and the right to have advance notice of any sanctions for violations thereof.
- ◆ To have the benefit of fair and equitable procedures for determining the validity of charges of alleged violations of the University standards of conduct. All procedures shall be structured to facilitate a reliable determination of the truth or falsity of charges while providing due process and fundamental fairness to all persons.
- ◆ To retain unaltered status as a member of the University community and to be present on campus and attend classes during the consideration of any disciplinary matter, except for reasons relating to the safety and well-being of members of the University community or University property or a student's physical or emotional safety and well-being.
- ◆ To petition for redress of a grievance arising from negligent, malicious, or irresponsible actions of a member of the University community.
- ◆ To have University records reflect only such information as is reasonably related to the educational process of the University.
- ◆ To be informed of the existence, custodianship, and general character of all personal records maintained by the University.
- ◆ To inspect all personal records, except records determined to be confidential in accordance with properly established criteria.

- ◆ To have protection from disclosure of personal records to unauthorized person. Information will not be released outside of the University community without the expressed consent of or waiver by the student involved, except under valid legal compulsion or where there is a clear and present danger to a member of the University community, in which case the student will be informed of any such release.
- ◆ To establish and elect a representative, democratic student government which is accountable to the University and the student community.
- ◆ To be heard and have one's views considered at appropriate levels of the decision making process within the University community.
- ◆ To use designated University facilities as individuals and members of student organizations for extracurricular activities sponsored by registered student organizations and student groups, subject to the priority of academic needs and to reasonable University rules and regulations regarding use of facilities.

Code of Conduct/Policies

To help ensure the safety of our residents, Residence Life enforces the Student Code of Conduct for all Residence Hall students. Some particular policies of interest are included here. All policies in their entirety can be found at www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/usjs/pdf/code.pdf

Buckley Amendment

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, commonly called the "Buckley Amendment," is designed to protect the privacy of students. It requires the University to comply with the following principles:

- Student records are open for inspection by students upon request. Specific documents, which students have waived their right to inspect, remain confidential.
- Students have a right to challenge the accuracy of records and to request that they may be amended.
- The institution may not release student records outside the institution without student consent, unless one of several exceptions applies.
- Requests from outside the institution for information regarding students should be documented, as should releases of student information.
- Students have a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of the Buckley Amendment.
- Students have a right to obtain a copy of the University policy regarding the Buckley Amendment. It may be obtained in 220 Thackeray Hall, Office of the University Registrar.
- The University may establish categories of information known as "Directory Information" and release this information with student consent, upon request by individuals external to the institution. Students may refuse to permit disclosure of Directory Information by submitting a written notice to the Office of the University Registrar. Directory Information means:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone Number and e-mail address
 - Major field of study
 - Achievements, degrees, academic awards, or honors
 - Weight and height, if a member of athletic teams
 - Previous educational institution
 - Student's photograph
 - Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
 - Dates of Attendance

When the Office of the University Registrar receives a student's refusal to permit the release of "Directory Information," no further disclosures are made without the student's written consent (except to parties who have legal access to student records without

written consent.) A refusal to permit Directory Information is permanent. A student may rescind this action in-person or by submitting a notarized request in writing to the Office of the University Registrar. Note that the following procedures apply:

1. Students may review their education records by submitting a written request to the Record Custodian in the appropriate University unit. A listing of those University offices which routinely possess education records of students are set forth in University Procedure 09-08-01.
2. Students may request amendment of education records by submitting a written request to the Record Custodian and following the steps set forth in University Procedure 09-08-01.
3. As set forth in University Policy 09-08-01, access to a student's education records may be required and permitted by University faculty and staff for legitimate educational purposes where access by such individuals is necessary to complete their University-related duties.
4. The University may forward education records to other educational agencies or institutions that have requested such records and in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. If you choose not to have Directory Information released, please send your name, address, Social Security number, and the following statement: "I hereby request that no personal information included in Directory Information be released," along with your signature and date, to 220 Thackeray Hall, Office of the University Registrar.

Alcohol Policy University Owned Housing

The University of Pittsburgh complies with all state and federal laws pertaining to possession, consumption, and transportation of alcohol and/or drugs. In addition, we have a “knowingly present” violation. It states: Students who are knowingly present during the commission of the violation(s) of “possesses or consumes alcoholic beverages if under the age permitted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or if in facilities where prohibited by the University; or dispenses alcoholic beverages to an individual who is under the age permitted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or violates any provision of the University alcohol policies,” will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Visitation Policy

(To best serve our students by providing safe residence halls, this policy is currently under revision and a new policy will be place for the 2008-2009 academic year.)

The following procedures and regulations governing guest visitation have been developed for students in residence in order to meet their needs of personal security, and to assure students the right to privacy in their living units. A visitor or guest is defined as a person who is present at a campus residence at the invitation of a contractual student.

Residents will be accountable for rule infractions for all visitors/guests, including those signed in by the resident and those accompanied by the resident, as well as all visitors/guests within a resident’s accommodation.

If visitation becomes problematic between roommates within a given room, the individual experiencing the problem should first address the issue with their roommate and if unable to resolve it, should then contact the Resident Assistant. If you have any unresolved issues related to visitation or wish to seek an exception to any of the provisions of this policy, please contact the Resident Director of your building.

1. All visits are subject to the following conditions:
 - a. The roommate’s approval is required, which is granted through the Roommate Contract. All resident students will have the opportunity to establish and regulate visitation through their roommate contract.
 - b. All residents and visitors/guests must present proper photo identification to gain building entry. Proper identification includes state issued identification as well as identification cards from other schools.
 - c. The Desk Attendant will sign in and sign out visitors/guests.
 - d. All visitors/guests must be escorted by the resident who signed them in while in the building.
 - e. Residents are limited to five (5) visitors/guests at any one time.
 - f. A resident may not entertain children under five (5) years of age unless accompanied by a parent, without acquiring permission from Residence Life. At

no time are children under the age of five (5) permitted to stay in the residence halls overnight.

g. A resident may not entertain persons under the age of sixteen (16), unless accompanied by a parent. If the parent is not present, permission of Residence Life must be acquired through the issuance of a guest pass. Guest passes may be acquired through Panther Central at the following times: 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. They may also be procured in advance by contacting the Resident Director in your building during their posted office hours.

2. An extended guest is defined as any guest visiting between the hours of 2:00 AM and 8:00 AM. All visitation regulations apply to extended guests. Residents may have extended guests subject to the following additional conditions:

- a. The roommate's signature of approval is required on the roommate contract.
- b. A resident may not have more than two (2) extended guests at one time.
- c. An extended guest may not stay longer than three (3) consecutive days (Sunday through Saturday).
- d. A resident is limited to having six (6) extended guest nights during any calendar month.
- e. The total number of extended guest nights allowed for any resident student is twenty-four (24) in a given semester.

Parental Notification of Student Misconduct

This policy provides that parents/guardians of a student who is under twenty-one (21) years of age will be notified when the student is found responsible of or admits to an alcohol or drug infraction. Amendments to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA" or "Buckley Amendment") allow parents of any student to be notified of that student's violation of any Federal, State or local law, or any rule or policy of the University, relating to the use or possession of alcohol or controlled substances if:

(1) the University has determined that the student has committed a disciplinary violation with respect to that use or possession; and

(2) the student is under the age of twenty-one (21) at the time of the disclosure to the parent. For all matriculating students, this policy became effective August 22, 2001. This policy is adopted to insure that parents/guardians of a student who is under the age of twenty-one (21) (at the time of the disclosure to parents) are informed when their student is cited for alcohol or controlled substance violations while attending the University of Pittsburgh. It is intended as an educational strategy, to enable parents/guardians to partner with appropriate University representatives to reduce the risk of University students developing patterns of behavior that could jeopardize their academic success or health and well being. It also is intended to empower parents/guardians to help to reduce drug and alcohol abuse on campus. Under special circumstances, professional staff at the University will maintain the discretion to use their judgment not to notify if they determine that to be in the best interest of the student.

When and How Parents/Guardians Will Be Notified

Parents/guardians of students will be notified in writing when: a student admits to being responsible or is found responsible of an alcohol or drug infraction by a hearing officer. This does not include students who are sanctioned solely for being "knowingly present" during drug and/or alcohol violations.

Who parents/guardians should contact if they have any questions:

There will be a cover letter enclosed with a copy of the sanction letter explaining whom to contact for additional information. Before calling, it is suggested that parents/guardians contact their student first to determine if the parents/guardians assistance is required. The University hopes that parents/guardians can play a proactive role in this process by using their influence to keep students from returning to the judicial process. This can be done best by having private family discussions and understandings. Staff members from Residence Life and the Assistant Dean's Office are available to provide any necessary clarification. Residence Life may be contacted at 203 Bruce Hall on campus or at (412) 648-1200. The Assistant Dean's Office can be contacted at 738 William Pitt Union or by telephone at (412) 648-7910.

A parent/guardian cannot change a sanction:

The system of due process for all students does not allow the University the option to forego duly authorized sanctions for some students and not for others. Students who commit violations will be held accountable for their offense(s) as part of their education. They also will have available counseling and other academic support services to maintain their educational goals. The vast majority of students readily adapt to these opportunities. Recent evaluations indicate that only about 4% of the students who receive alcohol counseling through the University's referral system, for example, return to the judicial process for a repeat offense.

Roommate Conflicts

Students are encouraged to speak with their roommate(s) should a problem arise and to be proactive in resolving issues. If the students are unable to reach a compromise, Resident Assistants can be asked to serve as a mediator between the involved parties. If mediation proves to be unsuccessful, a student may request a room change. Room changes are permitted only after these initial steps have been taken. As this is an issue that concerns residents, parents and guardians have a limited role in these types of situations. It is best to permit the residents to work towards their own resolution. For additional information, please see the Housing website at: <http://www.pc.pitt.edu/housing/index.html>

Roommate Agreements

At the beginning of the fall semester, residents are given the opportunity to complete a roommate agreement. This form covers such issues as designated study hours, visitors, cleaning schedules, and sleeping times. All residents are asked to take an active part in a discussion of these areas with their roommate(s) and return the form to their Resident Assistant.

Tips for Dealing with Roommate Conflicts

- Be honest and level with each other.
- Remain calm.
- Try to understand your roommate's point of view.
- Start conversations with the intent of resolving the issue.
- Use "I" statements to show how you are feeling and what you need. Utilizing statements that begin with "You" tend to put people on the defensive.
- Maintain confidentiality about the conflict. Try not to share the issues with people that are not involved as this tends to complicate the situation.
- When a third party is necessary, ask your Resident Assistant to step in and help out the situation.

Millennial Students and ‘Helicopter Parents’

Millennial Students

The majority of today’s college students are part of the “Millennial Generation.” They were born between 1978 and 2000; they have never known life without MTV, fast food, or video games; and they are extremely technologically-savvy. Why is this important? Access to computers and proficiency with the internet makes information virtually immediate. This immediate and open access to information provides opportunity for Millennials to ingest information faster at a younger age, and therefore increases their relative intelligence. Because Millennials are very intelligent, they are subject to high expectations, which cause stress and anxiety. Their expectations of immediacy and instant gratification do not stop at information. This is evidenced in the popularity of extreme sports and the unrealistic expectation that a degree alone equals success and a six-figure salary. Finally, the way the Millennial Generation communicates has changed dramatically. Face-to-face communication has taken a backseat to text messaging on cell phones, or instant messaging on computers.

Given these changes, we must emphasize certain skills that are necessary for success in college and beyond, specifically conflict resolution and patience. Within Residence Life, we work in conjunction with parents to develop and sharpen these skills. In the Parent Tips section you will find some practical tips to help your student make this transition as easy as possible.

Parents of Millennial Students

This section is for you and about you. You will find some broad generalizations, and though some may not describe you, we’re sure that you’ll find several that you relate to. (Please note the terms “Child and children” are used throughout this section, not as indicators of physical age, but of family rank.)

Parents of Millennial students are typically Baby Boomers and were born between 1949 and 1964. The social climate changed dramatically during their lives, and so did the family. As students, Baby Boomers were often the first in their family to attend college. They shuffled from major to major, and from job to job as they worked to find their niche. As parents, they lived in times of relatively low unemployment, and climbing divorce rates in the United States. Dual earner households emerged as the norm, and the size of the family decreased. Smaller families allowed for more individual attention and focus on their children. Accordingly, they have a deeper relationship and more of an investment in their children’s future, both from an emotional and financial standpoint. While there are many benefits to this type of close relationship, there can also be drawbacks. Parents who become too involved in the day to day management in their children’s lives can inhibit the development of their children.

“Helicopter parents”, as they are sometimes called, hover over every state of their child’s development, from birth through college years, and sometimes beyond. It’s an

easy trap to fall into; their intentions are in the right place, and they only want what is best for their child. They don't want their child to struggle, or make the same mistakes they made. Helicopter parents have been known to make all of the important decisions for their children, inadvertently sending the message that their children are not capable of handling their own lives. When children make mistakes, helicopter parents will frequently fix them, depriving their children from learning important life lessons.

Once children have moved away from home, helicopter parents continue to exert control over the lives of their children. For example, they often maintain frequent telephone contact to ensure that their children are awake in time to make their classes. Beyond college, it is not unheard of for helicopter parents to contact prospective employers to inquire as to why their child didn't get an interview or job offer.

It is important for parents to know that when their children move away to attend college, they still need love, support, and guidance. However, they also need to learn that it's ok to fail. Most importantly, they need to learn how to be independent and take care of themselves.

Tips & Suggestions

The following suggestions, tips, and advice, can help you assist your son/daughter make the most of their college experience. You'll find these suggestions below:

1. **Don't overreact if your child reports being homesick.** We understand that the first few days can be the hardest; accordingly during orientation we offer numerous activities to keep students busy and provide many opportunities for socialization. Beyond orientation, Resident Assistants (RAs) offer social and informational programs on a regular basis. If your student is displaying symptoms of homesickness, encourage them to seek out and attend these programs, and/or become active in one of the many campus organizations. (A comprehensive list of student organizations may be found online at <http://www.sorc.pitt.edu/search/index.html>)
2. **Communicate (write/call) even if they don't communicate back.** Contact means a lot, especially letters (and packages with cookies). It is important for you and your student to find a routine of communication so neither party feels uninformed or neglected. Don't panic though, if you don't hear from them for a day or two.
3. **Help find solutions, but don't solve problems for them.** Encourage critical thinking by asking questions such as "how did you come to that decision?", or "can you walk me through your thought process?" The goal is to reinforce the idea that students are capable of making their own decisions, while providing you the opportunity to still have some input.
4. **Encourage your student to solve problems at the lowest possible level.** Some specific examples:
 - If their neighbor's music is too loud, or distracting, they should first ask the neighbor to lower the volume. If that is unsuccessful the next step would be to contact their RA.
 - If they are not getting along with their roommate, they should try to work it out their problems and refer to the "roommate agreement" that they filled out together at the beginning of the semester. If their efforts are unsuccessful they should contact their RA, who will assist them further.
 - If your student expresses academic trouble in a class, encourage them to speak with the professor of the class or the teaching assistant about additional help.
5. **Listen, but don't overreact.** The occasional frantic phone call is normal. A failed test, an ended relationship, or the pressure of mid-terms, can be a lot to handle in the short term. Be patient. Your student will be over it long before your worries dissipate. If you have serious concerns about your student's welfare, feel free to contact their Resident Director or the Office of Residence Life.
6. **Expect change.** Change is natural and inevitable. College experiences will affect behavior and choices. While living away from home, students have an opportunity to meet people with experiences and backgrounds that differ from

their own. Ultimately, the people they meet, the things that they learn, and the experiences that they share will help shape what kind of citizen they will become.

7. **Visit during Homecoming/Family Weekend.** Though not always stated, visits are appreciated. This will also provide an opportunity for students to share both of their worlds with the people that they care about most.
8. **Are these really the best years of their life?** For many students, their college years can be a time of indecision, insecurities, disappointment, and mistakes. They often do not fully appreciate and understand the self-discovery, inspiration, and life-long friendships until after the fact. Support your student through the positive and less positive moments.
9. **Let them know that you trust them.** Try to support the decisions your student makes on their own. Students often struggle to define themselves within their new peer group and they need your support to reassure decisions, not second guess.
10. **Support them.** College is a transitional time for all involved. Keep an open mind and show interest in their new perspectives, goals, and aspirations.
11. **Do not be surprised if your student wants to change their major or has difficulty choosing a major.** Most students change majors at least once during their college career. If you find that your student is having a hard time deciding what career path that they want to follow, encourage them to seek assistance. Career Services offers workshops and individual consultations focusing on everything from selecting a major, to résumé writing and interviewing skills. Also, your student should stay in communication with their Academic Advisor because they have the most access to a student's academic record and progress.
12. **Encourage your student to learn and utilize the many resources available.** The University of Pittsburgh offers a broad range of services to ensure that our students have the resources that they need to excel, both during their stay and after they graduate. The Academic Resource Center (ARC) offers tutoring, study skills, and study groups to students throughout the semester and Career Services offers assistance in finding internships or jobs after graduation. Ask your student if they know what resources are available, and encourage them to seek out resources that might enhance or assist their university experience.
13. **Keep their home room intact (at least for the 1st year.)** There is no substitute for sleeping in your own room, in your own bed. It is important for your student to feel at home when they make return trips from college.
14. **Teach them life skills.** Before your student leaves for college or when they return home for breaks show them how to do laundry, cook, and manage money. These are important skills to know and practice throughout life.

The Impact of the Student's Move to College on his or her Parents

From: (<http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/transitions.html#parents>)

Moving on to college represents a significant step towards adulthood. Whether the student lives at home or goes away to attend college, the move represents an emotional separation for both parents and child. For most, the end of high school marks the symbolic end of childhood. This phase of life, especially when the student moves from home, is often referred to as “the empty nest.” Many parents talk enthusiastically about the changes—they feel less constrained, have more free time, and no longer endure loud music or competition for the phone, computer or car. But a sense of loss is apparent in comments such as “it's so quiet around here” or “I can't believe how much less I spend on groceries.”

Feeling a void: Feelings of emptiness characterize this stage of separation—there is vacant time and cleaned-out rooms. Parents may feel unprepared or uncomfortable without their role as primary caretaker and protector. Parenting is a tough business and a double-edged sword; successful parenting requires devoting one's life to a totally dependent being to ensure a safe, independent departure into the world —leaving parents behind. Joy may be mixed with longing as the young adult takes flight from home base.

Feeling left out: Adjusting to being on the outside can be difficult when parents are no longer needed in the same ways. Even though students may have been somewhat independent while still under their care, supervision, and roof, once in college parents are less privy to every aspect of their child's life; they no longer know the details of their son's or daughter's whereabouts and are not able to pass judgment on all their friends.

Relinquishing control: It is necessary to give up some parental control. Whether it's giving advice about selecting courses or drinking, parents have to come to realize that young adults must make their own decisions. Relationships grow and change as children grow and change.

What Parents Can Do

- Redirect time and energy previously focused on the child. Taking stock of personal interests and assets will reveal areas of life that may have been neglected. It can be time to develop, reawaken, and pursue old and new hobbies, leisure activities, and careers.
- As they play a new role in their child's life, parents must readjust their identity as parents. The goal is to develop an adult-to-adult aspect of the parent-child relationship. Children always need parents, but the relationship may become more peer-like. Accepting that adult children want more privacy in certain areas of their lives is part of this process. If there are other children still at home, the entire family structure will change.
- Ideally, discussions about values, which have occurred throughout the child's life, serve as a foundation. Before the send-off however, it is useful to re-discuss specific issues, since college students are usually confronted with situations involving sex, drugs, and alcohol as well as tough academic and interpersonal issues. Without moralizing or criticizing, even young adults benefit from hearing their parents' views on these issues.
- Address individual needs. Parents should investigate and inquire about available resources. Arranging for necessary services for students with a learning disability, mental illness, or physical condition should be done preventively. College staffs are specially trained to work with students of this age and these specialists should be identified prior to arrival.
- In the event of a crisis, it is preferable to support the student's own coping and problem-solving abilities rather than to rush in as savior, however difficult it is to hear cries of distress. Crises described from afar often sound worse than they are and can often change dramatically in the course of a few minutes or days. Parents, however, know their child best and must assess when their child needs their more direct help.
- Guide rather than pressure. Communicating educational goals and expectations should be done in a manner respectful of the student's own style and interests. College students need to pursue their own passions. Although parental input can be useful children should not be expected to live out their parents' dreams. Focusing on "my daughter the doctor" or "my son the lawyer" is unproductive. Parents must allow for the candlestick maker to emerge if that's what is best. College should be a time of self-discovery even if the process is marked by some bumps in the road.
- Plan ahead. In addition to all the details of hauling stuff off to campus and buying just the right desk lamp, deciding about such things as checking accounts, cell phone plans, and spending money before hitting the road is useful.
- Determine appropriate expectations and guidelines and be explicit. Parents should anticipate future events and discuss issues such as curfews and financial contributions directly with the young adult. If parents expect or want a weekly phone call, they must say so. If parents and students want to spend a particular holiday together, they should plan ahead.

- Allow for mistakes. Parents must encourage and accept the child's ability to make independent decisions. Both the college student and the parents must realize mistakes will be made along the way - it's called life experience. Learning from mistakes is another type of learning.

Additional Resources

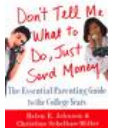
You can find additional information in the following resources:

BOOKS:

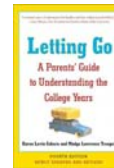
You're on Your Own (But I'm Here If You Need Me):
Mentoring Your Child During the College Years
by Marjorie Savage



Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money: The Essential Parenting Guide to the
College Years
by Helen E. Johnson & Christine Schelhas-Miller



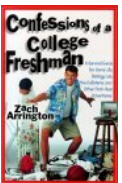
Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years
by Karen Levin Coburn & Madge Lawrence Treeger



When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parents' Survival Guide
by Carol Barkin



The Real Freshman Handbook: A Totally Honest Guide to Life on Campus
by Jennifer Hanson



Confessions of a College Freshman: A Survival Guide for Dorm Life,
Biology Lab, the Cafeteria, and Other First-Year Adventures
by Zach Arrington



Parents' Guide to College Life: 181 Straight Answers on
Everything You Can Expect Over the Next Four Years
by Robin Raskin

WEBSITES:

- www.collegeparenting.com
- www.mofchat.com
- <http://school.familyeducation.com>

Helpful Links

- Annual Crime report www.pitt.edu/~safety/campuscrimeReport
- Academic & Housing calendars <http://www.pitt.edu/calendars.html>
- Housing website www.pc.pitt.edu/housing/index.html

Contact Information

University Operator 412-624-4141
 Technology Helpdesk 412-624-4357 (4-HELP)

Office of Student Affairs 130 William Pitt Union 412-648-1006 saffairs@pitt.edu	Career Services 224 William Pitt Union 412-648-7130 careers@pitt.edu	Counseling Center 334 William Pitt Union 412-648-7930
Disability Resources and Services 216 William Pitt Union 412-648-7890 412-383-7355 TTY	Office of International Services 708 William Pitt Union 412-624-7120	Residence Life 203 Bruce Hall 412-648-1200 reslife@pitt.edu
Student Health Service Medical Arts Building Suite 500 412-383-1825 studhlth@pitt.edu	Student Life 140 William Pitt Union 412-648-7830 stulife@pitt.edu	University Student Judicial System 738 William Pitt Union 412-648-7910
Academic Resource Center 311 William Pitt Union 412 648-7920 www.pitt.edu/~arc/	Admissions & Financial Aid Alumni Hall 412 624-7488 www.pitt.edu/~oafa/	Book Center 4000 5 th Avenue 412 648-1455 www.pitt.edu/~bookctr/
Panther Central Towers Lobby 412 648-1100 www.pc.pitt.edu	Parking & Transportation 204 Brackenridge Hall 412 624-8612 www.pts.pitt.edu	Student Financial Services G7 Thackeray Hall 412 624-7520 www.bc.pitt.edu/student/
The Writing Center M2 Thaw Hall 412 624-6556 www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter	University Honors College 3600 Cathedral 412 624-6880 www.honorscollege.pitt.edu	University Police G1N30 Posvar Hall 412 624-2121 Non Emergency 811 Emergency www.pitt.edu/~police/
Resident Director Tower A 412 648-9050	Resident Director Tower B 412 648-1147	Resident Director Tower C 412 648-1150
Resident Director Holland/Amos 412 648-1160	Resident Director Bruce/Brackenridge/McCormick 412 648-3918	Resident Director Forbes 412 648-2695
Resident Director Lothrop 412 648-2813	Resident Director Sutherland 412 383-9101	Resident Director Pennsylvania 412 383-9080
	Resident Director Panther 412 605-5223	