

Student Success: Tips for Parents & Families

Families and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University have something in common - we all want to see your students succeed in college. With that in mind, we offer the following tips to help you and your students make the best use of your hard-earned educational dollar.

1. To assist your student in learning self-sufficiency, try to resist the temptation to do everything for him or her.

Instead, encourage your student to talk with an academic advisor, call the professor, find a tutor, talk with the RA regarding a roommate problem, and visit the offices which provide the services needed.

2. Remember that each of your children is unique.

Your first-born child may have gotten straight "A"s at college. Or, a child who previously attended ERAU may have had better time management skills or personal discipline to get good grades. Siblings may need different kinds of assistance academically, emotionally, and in other ways. Just because one daughter was a student leader does not mean that her sibling will pursue that avenue. One son's expertise in calculus may be an irritant to his brother who is failing the course. Although parental comparisons are meant to motivate, for many students they are seen as denials of their individuality and symbols of their failures. Even when unspoken, comparisons can add to a student's frustration. The bravado and independence of students often cover up tremendous needs for encouragement and validation.

3. Many students are convinced that if they get in trouble, get bad grades, or change their career goals that "my parents will kill me."

Students often agonize over decisions, problems, and crises on their own because they are afraid to tell their parents. In almost every case, the student needs parental guidance and support to best resolve the situation. After the fact, almost every student finds that mom or dad came through after the initial disappointment or anger. It is very important to tell your child that you are there for him or her, no matter what happens. After saying this, you must be sure to be understanding, rational, non-judgmental, kind and

loving, should your child tell you that he or she has failed to meet your expectations.

4. Realize that you have a tremendous impact on your student.

ERAU students are responsible young adults who worry about and feel responsible for helping their families. Your child will feel the impact of family arguments, financial setbacks, serious illness in the family, and problems of other siblings. When there is a family crisis, keep your student on academic track if at all possible. If a student needs special academic consideration, get him or her to the Dean of Students Office for assistance.

5. Realize that not all students are ready to be in college at the age of 18.

Likewise, some who were ready at 18 may change their minds at 20. Rarely is a student successful academically and personally if he or she does not want to be in school. Students may need time off to sort out goals, to mature, to try other avenues, or to regain motivation. To be in college because "all my friends are" or "my parents wanted me to come" is not a good beginning for success. If your student needs to take a semester to a year off, encourage him or her to consult their First Year Program Advisor for advice on procedures, feasibility of the idea, and alternative options for the time away.

6. Many young people behave in ways to hurt themselves precisely because their parents have made an issue of the behavior.

Extreme concern about drugs, pre-marital sex, alcohol, dating, etc., does not help the parent's peace of mind or the student's ability to make rational choices. Discuss concerns and exceptions but don't smother or preach. It takes a great deal of self-control, but keeps communications open.

7. Realize that there are times when the University will have to take action concerning a student's behavior.

Standards of conduct, academic standards, and regulations are set up for the ERAU community welfare, as well as for each individual student situation. Embry-Riddle must balance the student's situation against community standards when making exceptions in order to be fair to both the University community and the individual student. Exceptions may be made only for extremely extenuating circumstances. If a student's behavior has resulted in

sanctions, parents should consider the student's responsibility in the situation.

8. You are very important in your student's growth process and success in college.

Help your student make major decisions by reviewing the pros and cons of options rather than making the decision yourself. Work with your student to balance independence and dependence. Keep the lines of communication open so that both of you can enjoy the college experience.

We hope you find these tips helpful. We would also like to thank the Office of Advancement at the College of William and Mary, from whose publication, Parent's Perspective, this was adapted.

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