

How to Stay Connected with Your College Student

An OS3-sponsored Parent/Family Webinar
September 2025

Your Presenters

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Agenda

- ❖ Your Job Didn't End When They Got to SMCM
- ❖ The Importance of Staying Connected
- ❖ Tips on How to Strengthen Your Relationship
- ❖ Let Them FAIL
- ❖ Setting Fluid Expectations
- ❖ Hawktoberfest at Family Weekend

Learning Outcomes

As a result of attending this webinar, you will be able to:

- ❖ Explain at least 2 reasons why it is important to stay connected with your college student.
- ❖ Employ at least 3 strategies for strengthening your relationship with your student/child.

Parent Engagement Time

In what ways can you provide support/assistance to your student?

Type your responses in the Chat or raise your hand on the reaction button to unmute.

Your Job Didn't End When They Got Here

❖ Still a vital support for your student

- Financial assistance
- Emotional assistance
- Guidance/advice
- Stability from a distance
- Wisdom from life experiences



❖ The relationship will shift, but not disappear

The Importance of Staying Connected

For Your Student's Well-Being:

- ❖ Reduce homesickness and anxiety
- ❖ Provide guidance
- ❖ Foster a sense of belonging
- ❖ Provide emotional support



The Importance of Staying Connected

For Your Student's Academic & Social Growth:

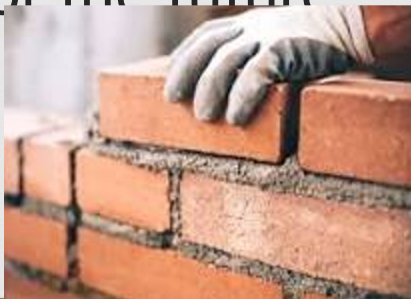
- ❖ Academic engagement increases
- ❖ Encourages healthy independence
- ❖ Promotes strong connections with others



The Importance of Staying Connected

For Your Parent-Child Relationship:

- ❖ Create a healthy, lasting bond
- ❖ Peace of mind
- ❖ Strong foundation for the future



How to Strengthen Your Relationship

- ❖ Give your student space
- ❖ Invite, don't demand
- ❖ Create a safe, happy place for them to come home to
- ❖ Ask open-ended questions



<https://collegiateparent.com/family-life/strengthening-relationships-with-our-college-kids/>

How to Strengthen Your Relationship

- ❖ Prepare yourself for change
- ❖ Encourage responsibility
- ❖ Celebrate the wins



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeLmbOJLhzi>

How to Strengthen Your Relationship

- ❖ Communicate regularly
- ❖ Listen, listen, listen
- ❖ Be positive, upbeat, intentional
- ❖ Send packages with a letter or card
- ❖ Don't try to fix everything
- ❖ Remember boundaries



<https://www.suu.edu/blog/2023/09/connecting-with-your-college-student.html>

Let Them FAIL

FAIL = **F**irst **A**tttempt **I**n **L**earning

- ❓ Students are allowed to fail!
- ❓ Failure should not be avoided, hidden, covered up.
- ❓ It hurts. It has value.
- ❓ Need to know that they are still loved, appreciated, understood.
- ❓ They still belong. They are worthy.
- ❓ Learn to talk about it and bounce back.

*Dinin, Aaron: "[Failure #9: Why This Isn't Called 'Learning from Failure'](#)" 8/22/25

Set Fluid Expectations

- ❖ Have a conversation about expectations and be flexible
 - Daily vs. weekly communication
 - Phone calls vs. memes
 - Acknowledge they will be adding more people to their support system
 - Coach → Cheerleader



Parent Engagement Time

How many of you are now empty nesters?

Is your SMCM student the first, second, third, fourth, etc. student to go to college?

Post your responses in the Chat.

Navigating Empty Nest

- ❖ Acknowledge feelings of loss
- ❖ Find a new normal
- ❖ Establish healthy boundaries



Tips for a Health Transition

- ❖ Be a supportive presence
- ❖ Communicate effectively
- ❖ Let go gracefully



Hawktoberfest at Family Weekend

- ❖ Combination of Homecoming and Family Weekend
- ❖ Oct. 17-18
- ❖ Most events/games on Oct. 18
- ❖ River cruises, the Great Bamboo Boat Race, Seahawk Memorial 5K race, Seahawks Got Talent Showcase, art gallery exhibition, Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, alumni reunion games, varsity Homecoming games, HawktoberFEAST dinner.

Register for Hawktoberfest

Hawktoberfest – Signature Events | SMCM

