FIRST-YEAR PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT GUIDE

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
Division of Student Affairs

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Finding oneself is a difficult enough process without feeling that the people whose opinions you respect most are second-guessing your own second guessing. One of the most important things my mom ever wrote me in my four years at college was this: I love you and want for you all the things that make you the happiest; and I guess you, not I, are the one who knows best what those things are. If you're smart you'll believe it, mean it, and say it now. (A college student)

Welcome to the FIU Family! Over the next year, your child will embark on a remarkable journey – college life. This next step in your child’s life is a time full of exciting adventures, challenges, newfound dreams, uncertainties, unfamiliar faces, and new surroundings. Relationships with your child may take on new dimensions; time together may become more precious and you may feel a sense of fulfillment or more time on your hands.

On the other hand, you as a parent may have mixed feelings about the changes that are likely to occur throughout these next few years. There may be a shift in the degree of involvement you have in your child’s life. The transition from ‘protector’ to ‘guide’ for you as a parent and ‘adulthood’ for your child is a struggle for many. Whether your child continues to live with you, moves on campus, or moves out on their own in the community, these changes should be acknowledged, discussed, and negotiated.

The common goal of all parents, from any background and culture, is to see their children succeed, be content, and develop into responsible human beings. To continue helping your child reach these personal goals in this process, we have included some helpful hints.
What to Expect?

Expect Change
Normal Part of Transition
• Exposure to new challenges and experiences
• Formalizing their identity
• Questioning and exploration
• Altered sleep patterns
• Feelings of loneliness, frustration, anger, and homesickness

Confusion/Indecision
• Feeling of uncertainty about future goals and aspirations
• Defining themselves clearly in the long run
• Becoming doubtful about what they have learned compared with new information and challenging alternative perspectives
• Adoption of new routines and practices

Approval
• Your acceptance and approval remains extremely important
• Challenges when you do not agree or approve of their choices or opinions
• Give support whenever possible

Mistakes
• Useful to future situations
• Necessary for the development of new skills and techniques
• Important to learn how to handle setbacks or failures and to move forward

Movement toward self-reliance
• Facing additional responsibilities, greater demands, and more choices
• Less structure or guidance
• Balancing a number of choices
• Learning valuable lessons that will carry them through life.
• May be a challenge at the beginning

Formation of their identity
• Beginning to define who they are
• Making major decisions that will impact their future
• Association and belonging to particular groups
• Exploration of different courses and interests
• Questioning and examining previous beliefs

Exploration and Intimacy
• Emerging and exploration of new impactful relationships and networks
• Ending of old relationships
• Some may find their first love
• Develop greater self-awareness, new friendships, and close relationships

New Experiences, Concepts, Philosophies
• Search for self-knowledge “Who am I?”
• Experimenting with new ideas, theories, and experiences
• Exploring a new independence and identity

Apprehension
• New situations, new faces, new expectations
• Uncomfortable and slow adjustment into a new environment
1) Your role as a parent will change
   • Begin recognizing that your child is an adult.
   • Don’t be a “helicopter parent” – don’t swoop in to fix their problems. Offer options instead.
   • Give them space to grow.
   • Build a system of trust between you and your child.
   • Be patient and keep in mind this is their transition into adulthood.

2) Help them become independent problem solvers
   • Give them tips and advice on budget-keeping, laundry, and cooking.
   • Offer suggestions, choices, and possibilities - not solutions to problems.
   • Don’t tell them what to do or resolve the issue for them.
   • Help them understand difference between high school and college life.

3) Keep the communication lines open
   • Have a conversation about drugs, alcohol, sex, and friendships.
   • Keep in contact (e-mail, social media, text, and phone) – BUT NOT TOO MUCH!
   • Discuss the balance between academics and social life.
   • Be open-minded about sensitive topics or feelings they wish to talk about.

4) Inspire them to stay focused on their academics and follow their dreams, not yours
   • Encourage them reach out to their professors, academic advisor, teaching assistants, or study partners if they need help with coursework or assignments.
   • Visit the University Learning Center and use tutoring services on campus to improve study habits, time management, and writing skills.
   • Try to keep the focus on them and their efforts which will lead to success.
5) **New relationships and acquaintances**

- Seize the opportunity to meet their new friends, advisor, and professors.
- Respond to requests for advice on relationships and dating (e.g. group dating).
- Get involved in family-friendly events (e.g. Family Day in October, sports events, concerts).

6) **Apart from academics, the college years are a time of exploration**

- Let them find their way and become engaged in college life by participating in extracurricular activities (e.g. Student Government, clubs, interest or community service groups, etc.).
- Encourage them to get involved by getting a job/internship or volunteering to help sharpen team-building and professional skills.
- Work in concert with Career Services to build their resume, do mock interviews, network, and build important relationships crucial to their career paths.

7) **Allow them to learn from their failures and mistakes**

- Remind them that everyone makes mistakes and they are not alone.
- Share stories of your past experiences with them (e.g. going to college, moving to a new country, new job, first relationship).
- Reassure them that there are on-campus resources that are there to help them during stressful times (e.g. CAPS clinicians, Student Health, Academic Advisor).

8) **Be supportive**

- Send care packages (e.g. pictures, toiletries, or favorites snacks/drinks).
- Schedule visits ahead of time.
- Encourage, not discourage and/or scold them.
- Try not to overwhelm them with issues from home that can wait until after finals.

9) **Relax and enjoy the ride!**

- Use the time they are away to focus on some things you enjoy doing.
- Take pride in your child for being able to make it this far.
- Recognize your hard work and effort in this important transition in your child’s life.
Elements of Effective Parenting

- Emphasize their strengths
  Focus on what’s right; have positive expectations

- Acceptance
  Value their goals, value them as they are, help them feel significant, allow for mistakes.

- Mutual trust
  Show you believe in each other

- Mutual caring and respect
  Show you are important to each other

- Open feedback
  Be constructive in your views

- Maintain a sense of humor
  Laughter is a great antidote!

- Mutual commitment
  Commit to common goals and freedom to pursue personal goals

- Listening
  Listen, listen, listen; you are their sounding board

It’s important to remind yourself of what you already know about parenting. The elements that enhance our relationships with our children still work at this time of transition.
ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILY

Freshman Convocation - August of Freshman Academic Year
Parent + Family Day - October of Every Academic Year

For more information visit:
orientation.fiu.edu/freshman

FIU Sports Games
fiusports.com
recreation.fiu.edu

ONLINE RESOURCES

Parent's Newsletter
Sign up @ orientation.fiu.edu

FIU Online Parent Guide
universityparent.com/florida-international-university
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<th>ON-CAMPUS CONTACT INFORMATION</th>
<th>MMC</th>
<th>BBC</th>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Life</td>
<td>Campuslife.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2137</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Services</td>
<td>Career.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2423</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling and Psychological Services</td>
<td>Caps.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2277 (CAPS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Resource Center</td>
<td>Drc.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 3532</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>Finaid.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 7272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Health &amp; Wellness Center</td>
<td>Healthservices.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; Residential Life</td>
<td>Housing.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 4190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student Services</td>
<td>Globalaffairs.fiu.edu/isss</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2421</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Library.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2451</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of Multicultural Programs &amp; Services (MPAS)</td>
<td>Mpas.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2436</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation &amp; Parent Programs</td>
<td>Orientation.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 6414</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Police Department</td>
<td>Police.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 5911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>Studentaffairs.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Services</td>
<td>Onestop.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Studies</td>
<td>Undergrad.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Empowerment Program</td>
<td>Vep.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness &amp; Recreation Center</td>
<td>Recreation.fiu.edu (MMC) Bbcrec.fiu.edu (BBC)</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's Center</td>
<td>Women.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 1506</td>
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## Florida International University’s School and Colleges

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<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Communication, Architecture, &amp; the Arts (CARTA)</td>
<td>carta.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 7500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Arts, Science, &amp; Education (CASE)</td>
<td>case.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Business</td>
<td>business.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 388 – 2751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Engineering &amp; Computing</td>
<td>cec.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 2522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>cnhs.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 7709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Stempel College of Public Health &amp; Social Work</td>
<td>stempel.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 4903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplin School of Hospitality &amp; Tourism Management</td>
<td>hospitality.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 919 – 4500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors College</td>
<td>honors.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 4100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Science</td>
<td>armyrotc.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 1619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Law</td>
<td>law.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 8006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine</td>
<td>medicine.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 0570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven J. Green School of International &amp; Public Affairs</td>
<td>sipa.fiu.edu</td>
<td>(305) 348 – 7266</td>
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