

Six Steps to Help You and Your College Student Proactively Address Your Worries

by [Vicki Nelson](#) ^[1]

In our last post we shared some of the information gathered in the latest parental survey conducted by the [College Parents of America](#) ^[2] organization. Among the statistics gathered as part of this survey, nearly 24% of parents expressed concern that their student will be successful in college and will complete their degree on time. That's a lot of parents with concerns.

Some parents are concerned about their student's academic preparation (6%) and others (18%) express concern that other factors may impede their student's progress. Some of these parental concerns may be more well-founded than others, but whatever fears or concerns parents may have, worrying about your child's success means that sending your student off to college may be especially difficult.

It is a helpless feeling to worry about something that you can't control or confront. Of course, there will always be some concerns, but we'd like to offer some suggestions that may help parents and their students face some of the concerns that may be clouding the college send-off. These suggestions aren't intended to minimize parental concerns, and they won't eliminate real issues, but they may help parents and student identify and discuss the issues that exist.

Here are six steps to help you and your student take some proactive actions to confront and counteract concerns.

- **Identify your concerns.** Give them a name. Often, we have vague feelings or beliefs but have difficulty being specific. You may have one large concern or several smaller issues that add up. Name and list them. Write them down. Be specific about what the issue is and why you are concerned about it. What reason do you have for the concern?
- **Identify the obstacles that you anticipate that your student will face that will create the problem.** When is your student going to encounter this issue? What is the situation or timing? For instance, if you identified organization or time

management as an issue, your student is apt to confront that issue as soon as he receives his syllabi and assignments and then again at midterm or final exam time. If making friends and socializing is a concern, that may arise as soon as your student arrives on campus.

- **Identify the skills or strengths that will be necessary to overcome the obstacles and counteract the concern.** Does your student have any of these strengths? Once you think about it, you may realize that your student is already armed to face the issue. What skills might your student work on to be better prepared?
- **Talk to your student about your concerns.** Does your student know you are concerned? Does he share your concerns? Does he disagree? Often we worry, but we don't share our fears. If your student shares your concerns, you've now made progress toward working together to find solutions. If your student disagrees that this is a concern, tell him why you think it may be and ask him to explain to you why you shouldn't worry. Putting both your concerns and his confidence in words will help you both.
- **Work with your student to identify solutions, preventative measures and [action plans](#)** [3]. Once you've been specific and identified a problem, it's easier to be proactive. What can your student do to anticipate the problem, prevent it from arising and/or seek resources early to help confront it? Having a plan in place arms your student for success.
- **Agree on a plan with your student to check-in later to see how things are going.** If you agree now on a time and way to check-in, it won't feel as though you are checking-up because you don't trust your student. A check-in is part of the partnership arrangement you've planned. Checking-in and checking-up can be very different. And don't forget to congratulate your student if he's successfully overcoming obstacles along the way.

Whatever your concerns, being specific in identifying them and discussing them will help both you and your student to begin to take action. As you express your concerns, you may also be helping your student to identify his own worries and to share them. You'll be able to partner with him to address those as well.

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Links

[1] <https://www.collegeparentcentral.com/author/editor/>

[2] <https://www.collegeparents.org/>

[3] <https://wp.me/punbM-kA>