

The Nourse Parent

NKU Parents Association Newsletter



Image by Bob Elsdale Photography Ltd.

Support vs. Control:

Balancing Your Role

An article review of “The Role of Parental Involvement in “The Autonomy Development of Traditional-Age College Students” by Brian Cullaty, as published in the July-August 2011 edition of the ACPA College Student Educators International’s *Journal of College Student Development*

By Ashley Grimes,
Coordinator of Parent & Family Programs

Here at NKU, we value parents as important partners in students’ educational success. However, a good deal of media attention has been devoted to negatively portraying “helicopter parents” who are overly involved in their students’ college life. With these contrasting ideas, one may wonder: “Where do we draw the line between supportive partners and over-involved helicopters?” This article does a great job explaining the differences between these two approaches and how each could ultimately affect your student’s development as an independently-thinking adult.

The helicopter parent term denotes at least some amount of serious concern parental over-involvement can inhibit emerging adults’ ability to “develop the autonomy needed to function as competent adults” (Cullaty, 2011, p. 425). Beyond the catchy phrase, hopefully you can see the legitimate disadvantages of your student *not* becoming a self-governing, independent decision-maker. So how does a student develop these important characteristics of autonomy? Some researchers (Arnstein, 1989; Blos, 1979; Levinson, 1978) argue that a process of separation must occur, where the student does not end relationships with his or her parents, but rather negotiates new terms of these relationships. The relationship transforms into an adult-to-adult connection that includes mutual respect between distinctive individuals (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

To take a closer look at how differing levels of parental involvement affect autonomy development, Cullaty (2011) utilized a random sample survey with about 169 responses and interviews with 18 of those respondents. The overall findings revealed that while parental support is generally positive in encouraging autonomy development, parental control inhibits the self-confidence required to move toward autonomy. Cullaty explains, “When students felt supported by their parents they perceived greater freedom to make their own decisions and plan independently from the approval of others...[\(continued on p. 2\)](#)

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Important Dates:

All Month

NKU Volleyball and Soccer—[Click here to see the full NKU Athletics schedule](#)

November 3—29

Priority Registration for Spring 2012 opens for eligible current students

November 12

Last day to drop a course with 50% tuition adjustment

November 23—25

Thanksgiving Break—No classes

November 30

Early Registration for Spring 2012 begins

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Support vs. Control (cont'd)

gained confidence when they acted autonomously and received support for their actions from their parents” (2011, p. 431). In addition, he noted that students learned responsibility and described more positive relationships when their parents trusted them to make their own decisions and then supported those decisions. On the other hand, Cullaty warned that “although participants often appreciated input and advice, excessive influence inhibited their autonomy development” (2011, p. 434).

So, what can you do to ensure you're supporting but not hovering?

- Redefine your parent-student relationship to encourage greater responsibility while also relinquishing unnecessary control.
- Treat your college student as an emerging adult. This will encourage her/him to take on a greater level of responsibility for his/her own actions and will make her/him feel more capable to make independent decisions.
- Support your student, even through mistakes. Rather than looking to fix things for them, give them tools to cope and reassure them of their capability to move on.

PARENT-TO-PARENT: Tips for Holiday Vacations

By Sandy Ashley, Secretary of the Parent Advisory Board

During holiday break, our students need down time at home. Remember, college life is active and stressful. People are around much of the time, even in the dorm. Students juggle classes, study time, activities, work and friends. Time is needed to enjoy the sanctuary of home. Be patient if they seem to sleep more and want time just to do nothing.

1. **Students have a great deal of freedom at school. Remind them that the rest of the family at home is not on Holiday break. Parents may still work and siblings may still be in school.**
2. **College students often visit old high school friends. Curfews need to be discussed.**
3. **Ensure quality, one-on-one time with your student. This makes it easier to discuss grades, future classes, social issues and goal setting face-to-face.**
4. **Encourage students to spend time with siblings or other family members such as grandparents. These family members often don't get as much attention because of time restraints at school.**
5. **Order textbooks for spring classes online. Students can pick them up when they return to campus.**
6. **Complete scholarship applications (due March 15, 2012) and financial aid applications (FAFSA) (complete as soon as possible after January 1, 2012. To ease the financial burden and enhance your student's experience, encourage summer job hunting.**
7. **Check tuition balances for the spring semester, due on January 3, 2012.**

Breaks can easily turn into a difficult time between parents and college students if it is completely unfocused. Try not to lose patience with them if they seem unmotivated and at loose ends. Find a balance between the need to relax and recharge for the next semester and the need to have a purpose for a few weeks. Enjoy quality time as a family and have a great holiday.

Did You Know...

Fast Facts for Parents about Financial Literacy

- Without consulting the proper resources, students facing financial difficulties may not persist to graduation.
- Early Alert can provide you and your student information on the BIG financial picture, looking beyond this semester and understanding how today's choices affect tomorrow.
- The Office of Student Financial Assistance has a student aid calculator online that can help you estimate the amount of federal aid your student may be eligible for. Check it out on the Parent Programs website by clicking [HERE](#).
- Your student could win a great prize like a \$50 gift card simply by submitting a Financial Fitness Tip of the Month to the following website: <http://financialfitness.nku.edu/students/tip.php>.

Contact Early Alert for more information.

Email: earlyalert@nku.edu

Phone: 859-572-6497

Located in the Student Achievement Center in room 120 of the University Center.

In the Spirit of Giving

In this season of joy, you won't find anyone more joyous than a Northern Kentucky University December graduate. The relief and sense of accomplishment is apparent as our students cross the stage.

Now they are ready to change the world, but they can start by making a difference on campus. With a \$20.11 or \$75 gift to the NKU Senior Challenge, your graduates help provide scholarship support to the next generation of Norse. All donations benefit the Annual Fund for Excellence, which improves the educational experience and opportunities at NKU.

Those who give \$20.11 or more can write a special message in the commencement program. A \$75 gift entitles them to a personalized brick paver in our Path to Success outside Steely Library.

Want to honor your graduate? Buy a brick. It leaves a legacy and helps future students.

Visit <http://seniorchallenge.nku.edu> for more information.

Learning Assistance Programs

Is your student dreading the horror of final exams? Learning Assistance Programs can help! They offer wonderful resources to set students up for success. Encourage your student to visit LAP prior to the week before finals for best results! Some of the programs available that may help your student ace those finals include:

- 24/7 scheduling access to make a tutoring appointment

- Success Skills Center peer, one-on-one advice on topics such as time management, effective study habits, and more!
- Both a Math Center and a Writing Center to help your student through those tricky calculus problems or complex sentence structures.

And lots more!

Learn more: lap.nku.edu

Featured Resource

Tip of the month:

- ◆ Encourage your student to set an appointment with her/his advisor to register during the priority registration period from November 3rd — November 29th. This will help ensure your student gets all the classes she or he desires during the times most conducive to his or her success.
- ◆ An easy way to motivate your student to register early? Remind them that the 8am classes tend to be left for those who wait. Generally this gets students moving to pick a schedule that is ultimately best for them!
- ◆ For more information, visit <http://registrar.nku.edu/registration/priority.php>

Welcome to the newest members of the Parent Advisory Board:

- Ava & Bob Ritter
- Julie & Steve Broderson
- Jose Bonilla
- Suzanne Lee

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