

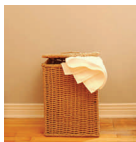
## When to Seek Help

Students have a wide range of reactions to starting college life. Some take to campus life right away, others experience a short period of homesickness before adjusting to their new surroundings.

Some students have more difficulty with the transition to college and may experience more troublesome thoughts and feelings. Some indicators that a student may be experiencing difficulty with separation are

- Coming home every weekend or increasing distress about returning to campus after a visit home
- Reluctance to attend classes or socialize
- Excessive worry about the safety or well being of loved ones

The Counseling Center provides confidential counseling to students that can address these or any other concerns affecting their personal or academic success. Students can walk-in weekdays to schedule an appointment.



**There will always be laundry.**



### ▶ Counseling Center

Westside Hall  
Second Floor  
Wilmington, NC 28403  
Phone: 910-962-3746  
Web: [www.uncw.edu/counseling](http://www.uncw.edu/counseling)  
Weekdays, 8 to 5

Division of Student Affairs



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

## Counseling Center

University of North Carolina Wilmington

## Letting Go: Tips for Parents of New College Students



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## Letting Go

Starting college is a time of mixed feelings for both parents and students. Even though you have likely been looking forward to this day, many parents experience some degree of separation

**Finding new balance in your life can be challenging.** anxiety when the idea of your child leaving home suddenly becomes a reality.



Experiencing a bit of anxiety about your student's future as well as your own is normal. You are going through a major transition in your life as you adjust not only to daily life without your student at home, but also to the idea that your child is now an emerging adult looking forward to experiencing life on their own.

Embracing the change is one way to deal with these feelings. Letting go is tough, but giving your student and you some time to adjust will lead to a rewarding adult relationship.

### Transition Tips

**Talk about it.** Don't wait until moving day to discuss your thoughts and feelings about your student leaving for college. Your excitement and joy is likely mixed with nostalgia and loss. Talk with other parents about their experiences and how they coped. Also, your child is likely experiencing similar feelings. Sharing will help normalize the experience.

**Expect change.** As emerging adults, students will change as they explore who and what they want to be. Ideas and attitudes may change. Appearance may change. Majors may change. These changes may not align with your hopes and expectations. Support and patience as your student works through these changes will help them learn to chart the course of their own lives and promote healthy adult relationships.

**Coach don't fix.** Now is the time to go from manager to mentor. Students often confuse newfound autonomy with lack of responsibility. Guiding and encouraging them to do things for themselves will help them gain the experience they will need to meet life's challenges. Show your student by your actions that you will support but not intervene when a problem arises or "do it" for them when they face an unfamiliar or challenging task. Encourage your



Letting go and seeing your student off on their journey is one of life's more difficult tasks.

student to learn about campus resources and to make use of them to address concerns and solve their problems.

**Adapt.** First year college students face a lot of unfamiliar academic and personal challenges. Often you and your student have expectations about the college experience that don't quite pan out in the face of these challenges. Adapting expectations with success and failure is critical for a healthy attitude towards personal growth. Confidence comes not from having a solution to every problem, but from knowing you can handle problems.

**Stay in touch.** College students like knowing you care, but sometimes they experience resentment if they feel like you are intruding on their newfound independence. Knowing that your concern is about their safety and well being and not their ability or "right" to make decisions on their own can help keep communications open and positive. Talk about staying in touch so you both understand each others needs for communication. For example, you want to talk every night or you want to check in at least weekly. This way expectations are clear.

**Engage in your life.** Your life is changing too. Give yourself, your partner, and other family members still at home the time and space needed to adjust. Keep your perspective by viewing going to college as just another milestone in your child's life. Enjoy this exciting time in both your lives!