

## Maturity Factors into College Success

Now that both fat and thin letters have all arrived, students are in the process of finalizing their college decisions. Despite the hype that colleges have become overly selective, the vast majority of students will have several options. Some students, having applied to both in and out of town colleges, must decide whether to live at home and attend a local college or go off to a college located some distance away. Rather than this final decision being based on academic or financial factors, the real question may well be whether the student has the maturity to handle living away.

Predictions for college admissions and college success are largely based on grades, ACT and SAT scores, and the rigor of high school classes. However, subtle or hidden factors related to the student's maturational level should also be considered. A college freshman away at college is essentially a high school senior without a parent around, while a high school senior is essentially a college freshman with a parent still in the picture. Although there isn't much difference in chronological months, the expectations are vastly different. Many high school seniors are sufficiently mature to head off to college and thrive with few problems. However, many excellent students with good college credentials leave for college and wind up not having an initial successful college experience.

What are some clues to identify if your student will be successful in leaving home to attend college? The following is a partial checklist of skills for a college student living on his own coupled with examples of college life behavioral expectations.

### New Roles

- Self-confidence to try new experiences (adapting to a new roommate and living arrangements).
- Insight regarding personal strengths and weaknesses (selecting a program of study appropriate to one's ability and educational background).
- Self assurance to make appropriate social decisions (avoiding risky situations involving alcohol, drugs and sexual encounters).

### Self-Management

- Setting realistic goals (registering for the appropriate number of credit hours).
- Managing time and resources (arranging study time under quiet conditions such as libraries or empty classrooms).
- Delaying gratification and balancing priorities (ignoring the social gathering down the hall in order to study).

### Responsibility

- Self-sufficiency (taking care of laundry).
- Fiscal knowledge (staying within a specified budget for credit card or cell phone use).
- Actions and consequences (after failing a math quiz, seeking appropriate help from the instructor or tutoring center).

### Problem Solving

- Stress management (dealing with a roommate problem by talking to the resident advisor rather than just stewing about it).
- Acting independently (trying to deal with a problem with a professor directly before calling a parent for advice).
- Setting appropriate limits (judging how many extracurricular activities with which to become involved).

Families with students who are preparing to leave the nest should consider the above issues in relation to the student's development and their readiness to tackle the maturational challenges of college life. Another year living at home might well be in the best interest of some late bloomers. Counselors at Jewish Family and Vocational Service (452-6341) are available to assess for college readiness and help with various college transition issues that high school, college bound seniors and their parents face.

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