

## **Parent & Family Support: Detrimental or Beneficial?**

With the popular term “helicopter parents” floating around today, it can be hard to know whether the support you are providing your college student, as a parent or family member, is helpful or hindering. To help dissect this, we have provided some research findings as well as some tips and best methods to make positive contributions during your student’s college career.

Recent studies have found that parent and family member involvement did provide positive benefits to student success overall. Moderation is key however, and families should watch for cues in their student to know the times when they need extra support and when they might need a little space. Some of the positive benefits found are included below:

- “Students with highly involved parents ...
  - “...excelled in many areas including higher levels of engagement, deep learning activities, self-reported educational gains, and satisfaction” (Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh, 2009, p.22)
  - “...showed greater gains on a host of desired college outcomes [including personal competence, personal and social development, and general education], and greater satisfaction with the college experience” (NSSE, 2007, p. 25)
- “Parental and family support and encouragement, including financial, positively affects student persistence.” (Shoup, et. al., 2009, p.9)
- Parental involvement has been shown to have a “positive impact in student development areas such as alcohol decision-making, health issues, and career development.” (Shoup, et. al., 2009, p. 9)
- Students were shown to develop more positive relationships and more effectively learn responsibility when parents and families confidently trusted them to make their own decisions. (Cullaty, 2011)

### **Tips to providing balanced support and involvement:**

- Offer advice only when asked for - be there for guidance and support them as they learn lessons and move past the situation;
- Be available to listen, support and encourage- sometimes all your student needs is someone to talk to without judgment or immediately trying to fix their problem;
- Encourage students to make campus and community contacts and learn to do things for themselves;
- Assist your student with financial aid, scholarships, loans, and budget development. Keep in mind that it is important not to completely handle any of these tasks since students need to learn how as they progress toward becoming more financially independent and responsible;
- Encourage your student to build a relationship with an advisor or other campus faculty or staff member so that they have someone to contact to gain information and resources without always turning to their parent or family member for the answers;
- Encourage students to get involved on campus with student organizations, campus recreation, community service, or another group. Making friends and feeling more connected will help them be more successful and increase their satisfaction while in college;
- When you- as a parent or family member- are not sure how to best help your student, have questions, or concerns about what might be available to them on campus, feel free to contact the Coordinator of Parent & Family Programs, Justin Gerardot, at (317) 274-4431 or at [jagfam@iupui.edu](mailto:jagfam@iupui.edu).