

How to Not Get *Too* Involved in Your Student's College Search



College applications can be stressful!

If you're stuck wondering if you're helping too much or not enough during the college search and application process, here's the good news: **You can support your student without taking over entirely.**

1. BE REALISTIC

Not every student is headed to the Ivy League, and that's okay. Keep expectations grounded when it comes to academics, acceptance rates, and finances. (Some of us are still paying off our own degrees, so... yeah.)

2. MENTOR, DON'T MICROMANAGE

Your job isn't to rewrite essays or run their applicant portal. Ask questions, offer snacks, and guide from the sidelines instead of quarterbacking every decision.

3. KNOW WHEN YOU'RE OVER-INVOLVED

If you know their portal password or say stuff like, "We applied," it's time to back up. Colleges admit students, not parents.

4. SET HEALTHY COMMUNICATION HABITS

Skip the daily interrogation. Try weekly or biweekly check-ins so college talk doesn't take over dinner.

5. SUPPORT, BUT DON'T DRIVE

Do: Help research, attend info sessions quietly, proofread when asked.

Don't: Choose their major, pick their colleges, or treat this like your second chance at undergrad.

6. PRACTICE SELF-CARE

This process is stressful for everyone. Take walks, call a friend, scream into the void — whatever keeps you centered so you can avoid taking out your anxiety on your student.

7. WATCH FOR RED FLAGS

Step in if you see scholarship scams, bad social media advice, or signs of burnout. Supporting doesn't mean disappearing.

8. CELEBRATE WINS (BUT GIVE THEM CREDIT)

Cheer loudly and proudly, but remember that they earned it. Buy all the college merch your heart desires, though.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Our students don't need perfection. They need encouragement, trust, and space to grow. You've brought them this far. Now, it's time to be their biggest cheerleader.