

COLLEGE PARENTING MISTAKES

Now that your child is preparing for or already in college, you are facing new challenges as a parent. Just as your student will be learning new information and making mistakes along the way, so will you. As you start on this new journey with your son or daughter, get familiar with these five college mistakes that parents make so you will be one step ahead of the game.

Forcing your opinions upon your child. As a parent of a college student (or soon-to-be college student), you no longer have the same control over your child that you once had. Forcing your own opinions upon your child about which college to attend, which organizations to join, when to study, when to come home for visits, what to eat, how often to exercise, etc. will only cause friction between you and your son or daughter. While you cannot force your student to behave exactly how you want, you can still have influence on your child's behavior by sharing your values and beliefs and respecting the decisions that your child makes. If you create an atmosphere of open communication and respect, then your child will be more likely to turn to you for guidance and possibly

follow your advice.

Avoiding financial discussions. Don't keep your student out of the loop when it comes to financial issues about college. Even if you plan to completely finance his or her college education and financially support him or her throughout college, you should still involve your child in financial discussions as it will provide a good learning opportunity. Make sure your child is involved in each step of the financial aid process, such as researching scholarships, filling out the FAFSA, understanding the award notification, etc. You should also discuss a college budget with your student and make sure he or she knows how to balance a checkbook and avoid credit card woes. Encourage your son or daughter to get a part-time job (as long as it doesn't interfere with school) in order to become more fiscally responsible.

Withholding your own college experience. If you went to college, share some of your experiences with your child. Talk about the classes you took, the activities in which you were involved, the stress you experienced around final exams, the

parties you attended, etc. Sharing this kind of information with your student will establish a stronger bond and help him or her realize that you understand what he/she is going through. If your child is a first-generation college student, you can still share experiences from your teenage and young adult years. We all go through some of the same life experiences whether college is involved or not.

Fostering a dependent environment. Amongst college faculty, this mistake is known as being a "helicopter parent." A helicopter parent hovers closely over his/her child in order to intervene during problematic times and stressful situations (e.g. grade disputes or roommate disagreements) or to help with everyday tasks (e.g. making doctor appointments or doing laundry). If you tend to be a helicopter parent, know that this kind of intervening can be detrimental to your child because he or she will never grow up and be self-reliant if always depending on you. It's crucial for you to remain supportive but still foster an environment where your child will learn how to become an independent adult. (Continued on page 2)

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Forgetting how important home is to your child. Because your student is going through all these new life experiences and making new friends, you may feel that home is not as important to him/her. On the contrary, home becomes even more important. While your student

is going through these new experiences, changes, and challenges, home becomes a foundation upon which he/she can count. Your son or daughter needs you to be there and needs everything to feel familiar during visits home. Don't redecorate his or her room (just yet) or stop cooking favorite recipes. With his/her ever-changing life, your child

wants to come home to the familiar.

College life is a whole new experience for you and your child. Along the way, you'll both make mistakes, and that's okay. Just remember to learn from them.

Source: Posted March 4, 2009 on www.ecampus.com

“Now we can start to look at how our best friend looks at us and figure out what makes our alliance and communication with them so strong.”

HOW DOGS READ OUR MOODS

A paw on the leg. A nose nuzzling against your arm. Maybe even a hop onto your lap. Dogs always seem to know when you're upset and need extra love, even though they hardly understand a word of what you say. How can that be? Our four-legged friends have a little patch of their brain devoted to deciphering emotions in human and dog voices, scientists reported in the journal of *Current Biology*. And the neural circuitry acts surprisingly like the voice detection device found in people's brains. The happier the barks or giggles, the more that brain region lights up. The sadder the growls or whines, the less it responds. “It's the first step to understanding how dogs can be so attuned to their owner's feelings,” says Attila

Andics, a neurobiologist at the MTA-ELTE Comparative Ethology Research Group in Budapest, who led the study.

To find the brain region, Andics and his team first had to accomplish the seemingly impossible: Get 11 pooches to lie motionless inside an MRI brain scanning machine for nearly 10 minutes at a time, all while listening to nearly 200 people and dog noises. Other researchers have gotten a few dogs to sit still long enough in an MRI machine to analyze their brain activity. But the feat has never been accomplished with so many dogs and for such long periods of time. “We really have no clue about what's going on in the dog's brain,” Andics says. “Now we can start to look at how our best friend looks at us and figure out what makes our alliance and communication with them so strong.” Back in the late 1990s, Canadian scientist identified a part of the human brain devoted to recognizing people's voices. The so called voice area doesn't process words or sentences. Rather, it figures out all the

other information packed into sounds. For instance, who's the person speaking? How is he feeling? Is she being snarky or serious? Silly or sardonic? Andics and his team wanted to see if dogs had an analogous region in their brains. But how do you get an energetic Border Collie to sit still long enough to perform the experiment? “If they move more than a few millimeters, we have to start the scans again,” Andics says. “We'd put an experienced dog up in the scanner, and he'd be up there sitting still,” Andics says. “Then we'd bring into the room a less experienced dog. And he'd get so jealous! He just wanted to be on the scanner bed like the other dog. It became the place of happiness.” After about 20 training sessions apiece, Andics and his team had a pack of Border Collies and Labrador and Golden Retrievers all ready for their experiments. (Continued on page 3.)



HOW DOGS READ OUR MOODS (continued)

They put headphones on each dog and let them listen to three types of sounds: human voices, doggy voices, and environmental noises, such as a phone ringing or a hammer hitting a nail. The team then looked to see which parts of the brain responded. Lo and behold, just as with humans, the dogs have a little patch of neurons that light up most strongly when they hear voices of their own species—other dogs barking, growling, or whining. There also was a region that was sensitive to emotional tones in both

human and dog voices. And that area was in the same location as the one found in people—right in the back of the brain near the ears. When you looked at how dogs respond to emotional cues in sounds, it's very similar to how humans respond," Andics says. "It's in the same brain region... and is stronger with positive vocalizations than negative ones." So how do our furry companions tell a happy giggle from a sad sigh? "Like people, dogs use simple acoustic parameters to extract out the feelings from a

sound," Andics says. "For instance, when you laugh, 'Ha, ha, ha,' it has short quick pieces. But if you make the pieces longer, 'Haaaa, haaaa, haaaa,' it starts to sound like crying or whining. This is what people—and dogs—pay attention to."

Source: Michaelleen Doucleff.
February 21, 2014
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2014/02/21/280640267/how-dogs-read-our-moods-emotion-detector-found-in-fidos-brain>

PRESTO PAIN RELIEF

Forget stickers and popsicles—hospitals may soon begin handing their patients MP3 players to speed their recovery. A study at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge determined that ambient music therapy had a positive effect on postoperative patients' recovery by improving pain management and decreasing the negative effects of environmental noise.

In this study, patients who had undergone surgery for cancer all received standard nursing care. Half

of them also got a preprogrammed MP3 player with ambient music—songs without words, played at less than 60 decibels—and were encouraged by nurses to listen for at least half an hour after they took their twice-daily medication. Before treatment, all the patients had similar levels of anxiety, pain and irritation at the amount of environmental noise. Three days later patients who listened to the ambient music said they were able to better manage their pain and were less annoyed by hospital noise, whereas

patients without music experienced no change, according to the study in *Nursing* last fall. Most of us already turn to music to help with emotional pain; these findings suggest we might want to try listening as a salve for physical pain, too.

Source: Michaela Slinger
Scientific American Mind 25, 17 (2014) Published online: 10 April 2014 | doi:10.1038/scientificamericanmind0514-17a



KICK THE HABIT FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Smoking rates are much higher among people with mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder compared to the general public. A new study suggests that not only can psychiatric patients quit smoking safely, but that kicking the habit may actually improve their mental health. American researchers said clinicians may focus on treating mood symp-

oms while allowing patients with mental illnesses to "self-medicate" with tobacco. However, they found that either quitting or reducing the number of cigarettes smoked by half was linked to a better psychiatric outlook. The study, which appeared in the journal of *Psychological Medicine* online ahead of print, was entitled "Smoking cessation is asso-

ciated with lower rates of mood/anxiety and alcohol disorders."

Source: [Psychological Medicine / FirstView Article](http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0033291713003206) pp 1-13 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0033291713003206> (About DOI) Published online: 12 Feb 2014





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IT'S NOT ABOUT THE APOLOGY

After a fight, most people want their partner to either disengage or to engage more meaningfully, according to a study of 953 married couples in the June 2013 issue of *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*. Which strategy to use depends on your partner's underlying concern in the argument; is he or she perceiving a threat or neglect? "A perceived threat encompasses anything that puts a partner's status in doubt, such as blame, criticism, or demands," explains lead author Keith Sanford, a psychologist at Baylor University. In these scenarios, the offended party is more likely to

want their partner to passively disengage by halting adversarial behavior and relinquishing power. "Giving up



**Which strategy to use depends
on your partner's underlying
concern in the argument.**

power comes in many forms, among them are admitting faults, showing respect and being willing to compromise," Sanford says.

When perceiving neglect, individuals wanted their partner to actively engage by showing investment, communicating more and, giving affection.

No matter what the tenor of the fight, the participants ranked an apology as the least important factor in the issue.

Source: Esther Hsieh, *Scientific American Mind*, January/February 2014, page 11.