

READY TO LAUNCH

Life Management Skills for a Successful Transition to College



We asked a number of student success professionals and parents of current or former Northwest University students what parents can do to help their student prepare to live on-campus. Here is what they said:

Laundry

Assure they know the basics of doing their own laundry—i.e. sorting, load size, detergent type, frequency, folding, what to hand wash/ hang to dry, sheets, towels, etc.

Food Basics

Though your student will be on a full meal plan, this would be a great time to talk about basic cooking skills and healthy dietary habits. Students have many choices in The Caf and *choosing* a balanced diet will be up to them. Help them learn how to be creative with different ingredients so as to eat a variety of nutritious meals that, ideally, are grown from the earth. Understanding microwave etiquette is also very important - what containers/foods can be microwaved, how to clean it out, what to do if something burns, etc.

Health and Exercise

Encourage your student to make a habit of getting outside and getting regular exercise every day. Sleep at least 7 hours every night, going to bed and getting up about the same time each day. If your student has any medical issues that require them to take a daily medication or shot, be sure that they are confident enough to take ownership of their medical needs. Guide them through the process of finding a local pharmacy or doctor's office. They should also be aware of the resources available through the Wellness Center such as our on-campus nurse.

Managing Money

Be sure to go over monthly budget essentials (gas, food, tithing, etc.) and extras (clothes, eating out, coffee, entertainment, gifts, etc.). It is especially helpful to practice this for several months before leaving home. Will they work? Be on a set monthly expense allowance? Either way, help them learn to live within their means. Accessing online banking or mobile apps to manage the account should also be discussed. There are a lot of resources and apps that students can download onto their phone to help them with their budgets.

Making Appointments

With regard to the dentist, doctor, orthodontist, chiropractor, etc., have your student make his/her own appointment and attend by him/herself. Have them bring their insurance card and know how to fill out paperwork. This is a hard place to let go of control, but very necessary. Will your student need a new doctor/ dentist/ orthodontist/ chiropractor at school? If so, have your student find one and do research, as you offer guidance. Finding a local doctor before coming to

school is also a great idea. Additionally, remind them that our Wellness Center is a great starting point and to make an appointment as needed.

Car Maintenance and Emergencies

If your student owns or daily drives a car - even if they aren't bringing a car to school - this is probably your last time to teach this: how/when to check the oil, tire pressure, etc. Go over how to change a tire or roadside assistance protocols. Have them prep the emergency equipment checklist and assure they are prepared for driving in PNW winter weather.

Time Management

Help your student find a system that works for him/her to plan weekly schedule. If he/she has struggled to account for deadlines/obligations/fun/rest in the past, having those honest conversations now would be worthwhile. Failing to plan is planning to fail. These are habits that, once in place, are helpful, but must be taught and learned. There are a lot of apps and tools to help with this. Encourage them to look for resources on campus in this area early in the semester.

Balancing Social Life

You may have an extroverted student that cannot wait to start the social aspect that comes with college. That excitement can often be paired with over-commitment and being perpetually exhausted. For this type of student, be sure to work on organization skills, prioritizing choices, and how to say no. For the more introverted student who tends to warm up slowly and not connect as easily, focus on being intentional with classmates and getting out of their comfort zone from time to time. The academic and social aspects of college are both vital to student success, so be sure to focus on the balance of focusing on both.

Talking with Teachers/ Coaches/ Advisors/ Counselors

Make sure your student knows they are capable of talking about assignments, questions, transcripts, troubles with professors and school employees. Everyone at NU is here to help and wants to see your student succeed. Coach them ahead of time to self-advocate and express their needs, but don't do it for them. Remind them that having questions about class work is common - encourage them to seek help sooner rather than later.

Email

Email is the primary form of communication at the University. Make sure you educate your student on how to be responsible in checking this often and responding to emails appropriately.

Conflict Resolution with Peers

Make sure you are intentional about coaching your student about how he/she addresses and resolves any conflict with peers. When it comes to conflict amongst roommates and peers, there are a lot of resources available to students to help students walk through that process via their Resident Assistant on the floor or the Area Coordinator of their building. However, if they haven't shared a room before, this would be a good time to talk about expectations and strategies for sharing space.