Helping Your Student Develop Life Skills

Over 1,100 Colorado State University parents and families completed the 2012 Biennial Survey and identified various areas in which they hoped their student would develop throughout their time at CSU. We have identified the top 6 and have provided you with tips to assist your student in mastering these critical life skills.

Managing Stress

- Stress is the pressure and tension we feel when faced with a real or perceived threat including situations that are new, unpleasant, or overwhelming.
  - Can be major, minor, and/or ongoing events
  - About 80% of college students report being stressed and overwhelmed, impacting academic achievement
- Stress-less tips
  - Accept what you cannot change and exercise control over what you can
  - Remember to laugh, get enough sleep, engage in physical activity, and eat well
  - Write down your thoughts and feelings
  - Work to make self-talk positive
  - Time management is key; plan ahead whenever possible
  - Take time out for yourself every day
  - Talk out your problems with a counselor or a trusted friend
  - Practice relaxation techniques: deep breathing, the calming response, imagery, progressive muscular relaxation, guided mediation podcasts
- CSU Resources:
  - http://www.health.colostate.edu/pages/resources/stress-management.aspx
  - Campus Recreation, CSU Health Network, TILT

Responsible Choices and Problem-Solving

- Can include health, safety, academics, managing time, substance use, etc.
- How do we make good decisions?
  - Determine the issue/decision that needs to be made
  - Compare options
    - List pros and cons of each
  - Make an informed decision
    - Utilize the pros and cons list to determine which course of action is best
  - Take action
  - Check back
    - Is the outcome satisfying? What adjustments need to be made?
- CSU Resources
  - CSU Health Network, Dieticians, Residence Hall Programming, Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services
  - http://accessproject.colostate.edu/sa/modules/sec4/tut_sec4.php?display=pg_29

Living Off Campus

- Includes developing many skills, such as:
  - Finding a place to live
  - Selecting a roommate and navigating and negotiating that relationship
  - Managing a budget
  - Buying and preparing meals, doing laundry, cleaning, etc.
- The Off Campus Student Handbook has phenomenal tips for all these issues
  - http://ocl.colostate.edu/Data/Sites/1/documents/handbook-complete-2013.pdf
- Other CSU Resources:
  - Off Campus Life, Upper Division Peers, CSU Health Network

Seeking Out Resources

- Interdependence is a key skill typically developed in college by locating and utilizing support systems. This can be achieved by:
  - Discovering which services are available and meet the staff
  - Schedule appointments with advisors and counselors (academic, career, mental health)
  - Research and join student organizations
  - Understand your own values and locate local resources which may meet those needs or interests
- Remind your student it is okay to ask for help in any of the following areas (and more!):
  - School
  - Work
  - Daily life
  - Relationships
  - Recreation/leisure
  - Spiritually/purpose
- CSU Resources:
  - CSU Health Network, Student Diversity Programs & Services, Student Case Management, TILT, The Career Center, SLiCE, Student Financial Services

Effective Communication

- Includes assertively and respectfully interacting and expressing oneself and one's needs with friends, roommates, professors, supervisors, advisors, and others
- Many strategies to consider and utilize:
  - Understand own and others' cultural values when communicating
  - Choose the appropriate type of communication
    - May be direct, verbal, electronic, over the phone, etc.
  - Determine timing of conversations and when they should occur and if the other needs notice
  - Actively listen to the other person and his/her perspectives
  - Use "I" statements (i.e., expressing how an incident impacted oneself rather than accusing the other person)
  - Make understanding one another the priority
- CSU Resources:
  - Conflict Resolution, Residence Life

Managing Transitions

- Transitions are constantly occurring, most notably when a student enters college, returns home for breaks, and begins to transition out of college. While needs vary for each transition, there are some common things to keep in mind:
  - Most people will experience the phases of ending, losing, letting go; spend time in the neutral zone; and also excitedly celebrate the new beginning (in varying orders and for differing lengths of time)
  - Parents and families can support their student by:
    - Being realistic and honest about goals, skills, and expectations
    - Helping to identify sources of fear, stress, and discomfort
    - Discussing resources and how to utilize them
    - Being patient and understanding these are challenging times for students
  - CSU Resources
    - Orientation and Transition Programs, the Career Center, the Counseling Center/CSU Health Network, TILT