

BookNotes

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If there was one book I could hand out to parents of newly-admitted freshmen, it would be Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money by Helen E. Johnson and Christine Schelhas-Miller. If parents read and followed the advice in this book, they would understand that college is also about the learning experience outside the classroom, too. This is the learning that helps a student take care of business without mom and dad calling, emailing, and generally trying to intervene in the student's business.

Don't get me wrong - there are obviously times and places for parent intervention, either with the student directly or with the university on the student's behalf. But the baby boomers have established a new sociological trend. They are often referred to as "helicopter parents" because they hover over their kids, trying to ease their way in the world, rather than letting them make their own mistakes and learn to manage their own lives.

The authors of this book, both veterans of college administration, get it right. They outline scenarios that parents might face once the student is away at school, and suggest what they should and should not do. Matters such as roommates, poor professors, confusing classes, partying, fraternities, choosing a major, living off campus - all of these and more are addressed.

Chapter 6, "What to Expect from the College/University" is especially good about telling parents about the services that the institution offers, how the student can find help, and where privacy laws may prohibit administrators from sharing information with parents.

This is good reading for college administrators as well. If your campus is like ours, you know that financial aid gets questions ranging from what size sheets to buy for the residence hall furniture to whether or not you can have a birthday cake delivered on campus. It's helpful to see what the students and parents expect colleges and universities to offer. It might also help you counsel a student whose problems go beyond the financial - at least give you some clues about where to help the student look for assistance.

Highly readable and highly recommended.