

Transition

A Family's Guide to College Success



ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Illinois' first public university



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Welcome

As your student gets ready to pack and leave for college, it's natural to reflect on this new chapter in both of your lives. College is an exciting time filled with new situations, challenges, and decisions. Some situations could involve alcohol and other drugs. This booklet has information to help you proactively talk to your student about how their choices can affect their immediate lives and future. You might not think your student values your opinions or listens to you, but you have more influence than you realize.

We want your student to succeed, and there are many support mechanisms on campus to help your student thrive. If you are ever unsure of how to navigate a situation, please reach out to the valuable campus resources listed at the end of this booklet.

Health Promotion and Wellness

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Illinois State University

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Transitioning to college

An important component to student success is preparing for the transition to college. Each student responds differently to change. Discuss your student's anxieties, fears, and excitement about attending college. Some students may welcome the fresh start, while others might be apprehensive. Additionally, all students take a different amount of time to acclimate to their new surroundings. It can take a semester to a full year for campus to feel like home.

Gregory Trifonovitch's four stages of cultural adaptation can help explain a student's transition to college. The four stages are honeymoon, hostility, humor, and home. It's important to help students understand that these stages are a completely normal part of their adjustment. Listed below are ways to help your student through the ups and downs he or she might experience during the various stages of transition.

The honeymoon stage is characterized by complete excitement over beginning their new experience. In this stage, students focus only on how great college will be. At some point during the first semester, the newness wears off and many students begin to feel that college isn't exactly what they thought it would be. The welcome

events are over, the homework is piling up, and college is different—perhaps harder—than they had imagined. This is when the hostility stage begins. The hostility stage is concerning because it can lead students to withdraw in class and from people close to them, or to participate in risky behaviors. Students in this stage can mostly benefit from a listening ear and support. Remind them repeatedly that things will get better, leading them to the next phase. The humor stage brings a sense of humor about the frustrations of the hostility stage. Students realize that college can be fun, even if it requires work, and that they are actually learning things that will help them succeed. The fourth and final stage is home. This is when students become comfortable in their college environment and it begins to feel like home.

Support your student at all stages and let them know that what they are experiencing is completely normal. If you feel your student needs more support than you can offer, the Division of Student Affairs has many support mechanisms in place to help students successfully transition to campus. Many helpful resources are listed at the end of this booklet. For a complete list, visit StudentAffairs.IllinoisState.edu/Your/Caring.



University goals and expectations

You and your student may have goals and expectations about his or her college experience. In order to support a first-rate educational experience and to help students reach their full potential, the University also has goals and expectations of students. We want students to thrive academically while creating responsible citizens who will be future leaders. Two guiding documents for student expectations at Illinois State University are *Educating Illinois* and the *Code of Student Conduct*.

Educating Illinois

Educating Illinois incorporates the University's vision, mission, and core values to guide daily operations and to serve as a road map to the future.

Core values

Pursuit of learning and scholarship: Illinois State University works with students as partners in their educational development so that students come to appreciate learning as an active, lifelong process.

Individualized attention: The University provides a supportive environment that places learners at the center of teaching and scholarship by utilizing innovative programs, strong connections, and superior services that focus on each student as an individual. The University also fosters academic and personal growth while recognizing unique educational aspirations.

Diversity: The University affirms and encourages community and a respect for differences by fostering an inclusive environment characterized by cultural understanding, ethical behavior, and social justice.

Integrity: The University promotes an environment defined by the highest ethical standards. Members of the University community work collaboratively to ensure everyone's success.

Civic engagement: The University prepares students to be informed and engaged global citizens who will promote and further the goals of society.

Goals

Goal 1: Provide a supportive and student-centered educational experience for high-achieving, diverse, and motivated students that promotes their success.

Goal 2: Provide rigorous, innovative, and high-impact undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare students to excel in a globally competitive, culturally diverse, and changing environment.

Goal 3: Foster an engaged community and enhance the University's outreach and partnerships both internally and externally.

Goal 4: Enhance institutional effectiveness by strengthening the organizational operation and enhancing resource development.







Code of student conduct

In addition to the guiding principles of *Educating Illinois*, the *Code of Student Conduct* clearly defines behavioral expectations for all students at Illinois State University. Violating the code can result in consequences ranging from fines to expulsion from the University. The full *Code of Student Conduct* is available at DeanOfStudents.IllinoisState.edu under the Resolving Conflict section.

Ultimately, we hope your student will take advantage of all the opportunities that college offers in a responsible and informed manner. We do expect your student to treat themselves and others with respect. Encourage your student to know what is required and to ask questions when needed. We look forward to working with you and your student to create a caring community that supports success at all levels.

Alcohol, drugs, and college

Alcohol and drug abuse are frequently noted as primary student life issues capturing the attention of those who work in higher education. With incidents of alcohol poisoning, DUIs, and hazing covered in the news, you need to be aware of the substance abuse-infused culture that your students are entering.

In addition, alcohol and other drug use play a significant role in crimes that occur in college communities. People under the influence make easy targets to those with criminal intent. When campuses address alcohol issues, they also make communities safer for everyone and reduce the risk of more serious crimes occurring.

While in high school, college-bound students are generally less likely to use alcohol and other substances than their non-college-bound peers. Once at college, students generally drink more heavily and frequently than their non-college-bound peers. It is common for parents/guardians to misperceive their student's alcohol and other drug use. Research has found that parental perceptions of their incoming students' current drinking, tobacco, marijuana, and other illegal drug use was significantly different than the actual use and intent to use. Even if you believe your student is an abstainer or a low-risk drinker, we encourage you to talk with your student openly and honestly about their current and future use of alcohol and other substances. For tips on how to have this conversation, see page 17.

Alcohol consumption habits at Illinois State University

During the spring semester of 2016, Illinois State University completed the Core Alcohol and Drug Survey, a nationally benchmarked assessment. Key findings of this survey were:

- 15 percent of students who responded reported not using alcohol.
- 25 percent of students who responded reported moderate (once per week) use of alcohol.
- 53 percent of students drink five or less drinks per week.

While many students express that they want freedom, many still highly value guidance, counsel, and direction from trusted adults. Numerous studies have shown that college students greatly overestimate alcohol use among their peers, as well as misperceive how valued or approved substance abuse-related behaviors actually are. Students may feel that in order to be accepted by their peer group, they must match what they perceive to be others' use and approval of alcohol and other drugs. Parents can help counteract these misperceptions by challenging the mentality that excessive alcohol use is a part of college and everyday life.

Issues with alcohol

We know a lot more about the dangers of alcohol consumption than ever before. Alcohol can cause problems in the hippocampus area of the brain, which is not fully developed until the mid-20s. Alcohol can also hinder the brain's ability to learn. Accidents, fights, and risky sexual behavior are all realistic scenarios that accompany irresponsible drinking.

These are some of the many reasons that universities and local law enforcement agencies take underage and excessive alcohol consumption very seriously. The goal of universities and local governments is to maintain an environment conducive to learning while prioritizing the health and safety of all residents. This is why universities have substance policies, and college communities have ordinances that control alcohol. Knowledge of ordinances and policies can keep your student from being cited while attending college.

Illinois law and local ordinances regarding possession and use of alcohol by minors are fairly straightforward. Bottom line: Minors under the age of 21 cannot legally possess or consume alcohol. Penalties for ordinance violations can range from campus sanctions to fines or even jail time. Ordinances for the town of Normal and the city of Bloomington are at www.normal.org and www.cityblm.org.

Our students make a lot of choices while attending school. Parents have an important role in deterring substance issues, such as alcohol. Take the time to speak with your student about responsible behavior. Students need to understand that responsible behavior will enable them to succeed. Just as future employers want the best and most responsible employees to represent their companies, universities require that same quality of responsibility. Students are tasked with both independent and responsible actions, which are the same traits that future employers look for when they hire.



Alcohol and academics

It is important that students understand that their actions now can have serious implications for their future. Illinois State University *Core Alcohol and Drug Survey* data show that students who consume more alcohol will experience negative academic consequences associated with alcohol use such as missed classes or tests and lower GPA. Of the students who drink alcohol, the more drinks consumed per week directly correlates with lower grade point average.

Alcohol misuse and abuse

Communicate openly with your student about the dangers of alcohol misuse and abuse. Share with them the signs of alcohol poisoning and the importance of calling 911. Often, students are hesitant to call for help because they are concerned about getting the victim or themselves in trouble if they are under 21. It's important that students realize that college students die every year from alcohol poisoning. Saving someone's life outweighs any possible consequences of calling for help. Students can seek protection through the Dean of Students Medical Amnesty and Good Samaritan form available at DeanofStudents.IllinoisState.edu.





Symptoms of alcohol poisoning can include **any** of the following:

- Conscious or semi-conscious
- Slow breathing: eight breaths or less a minute, or breathing that stops for more than eight seconds at a time
- Cold, clammy, pale, or bluish skin
- Does not respond when being talked to or shouted at
- Does not react to being pinched, prodded, or poked
- Unable to stand

Alcohol's role in sexual violence

Alcohol plays a complex role in sexual violence. Attorney Peter Lake explains that perpetrators use alcohol to facilitate sexual assaults. They do so by targeting vulnerable and/or inexperienced drinkers, using sweet drinks to camouflage how much alcohol someone consumes, and purposefully isolating an individual from their friends. While only the perpetrator can truly prevent an assault, understanding how alcohol is used as a weapon to commit sexual assaults can help keep your student and others safe.

Parent participation

When it comes to alcohol use, parents need to be the role model. A parent's visit is not the time to relive your college experience. Take pride in your student and allow them to show you their home away from home. Also, consider that allowing your student to ignore the legal drinking age while they are with you may give the perception of permission to violate the law when you are not around. This increases the likelihood that your student could make irresponsible decisions.

Marijuana and other drugs

Marijuana use is on the rise among college students. The consequences of marijuana use extend beyond possible penalties imposed by the campus or community. In addition to arrest and fines, a student convicted of possession of marijuana can lose access to federal financial aid, including student loans. For many families, a loss of financial aid is the same as losing access to higher education. A marijuana conviction may also restrict entry to law school, medical schools, and prohibit licensures necessary to become an educator.

Every family should make a point of discussing choices and expectations around marijuana and marijuana use. Despite perceptions that marijuana is relatively safe, the risks associated with even occasional marijuana use are considerable. Marijuana use has the potential to impair both physical and mental health. Its active ingredient, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) negatively impacts the lungs, brain, heart, immune system, and reproductive systems. In addition, those who use it once a week or more are considerably more likely than non-users to experience depression, anxiety, fatigue, and low motivation. Although physical effects and complications may not become apparent until later in life, the data provide strong evidence that using marijuana poses risks to students' physical and mental health, reputation, and future success.

Sometimes referred to as Black Mamba, Joker, K2, Kronic, and Spice, synthetic marijuana can have serious side effects. For more information on synthetic marijuana, go to the American Association of Poison Control Center website at www.aapcc.org.

Prescription drug misuse and abuse

The misuse and abuse of prescription drugs is a growing problem on college campuses. Prescription medication misuse is when someone takes a medication differently than how it

is prescribed for them or takes a medication prescribed to someone else. Intentionally using a prescription drug, whether it is prescribed for you or obtained from someone else, for the purpose of “feeling good” or “getting high” constitutes abuse. Misusing or abusing prescription medication is dangerous, even more so when mixed with alcohol or other drugs.

How you can help

Your student will be making many decisions about life during their time at college. While choosing courses and future goals are important, they will also make tough choices with important consequences. Talking with your student about these issues is essential. Be sure to emphasize that they have the ability to responsibly make these key decisions. And remember, your student still values your opinion. Below are some tips on how to have these important conversations.

Academics

We encourage you to consider taking the following actions to help your student be academically and personally successful.

- Set realistic academic goals specific to grades, grade point average, completing assignments on time, and so on. Work with your student to set short-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives. Regularly check in on their progress throughout the school year.
- Discuss realistic expectations about class attendance. Once a student skips a class, the likelihood of skipping additional classes increases.
- Discuss the amount of time your student devotes to homework, studying, reading, going over notes, and preparing for speeches and projects. Many faculty members will suggest that students spend two to three hours on work outside of class for each hour spent in class.
- Encourage your student to meet with each of their professors or teaching assistants outside of class.
- Openly discuss your concerns regarding substance abuse and its relationship with academic performance and success. Make sure your student understands that their choices now can affect their future.
- Talk with your student about the types and amounts of social activities they should participate in, and how such activity affects academic commitments and requirements. Promote and encourage offerings related to academics research opportunities, service learning, arts, and culture.
- Encourage your student to find a university club, organization, intramural sport, or some other activity that will connect your student with peers who have similar interests. Student involvement is a great way for your student to truly feel like part of the University community. Once your student steps onto our campus, they are considered a Redbird.



Redbird Respect: Being an empowered bystander

From the moment your student decides to attend Illinois State University, they become a part of the Redbird community. Our community encompasses diverse people, ideas, and cultures. This diversity is one of Illinois State University's most prominent strengths, and inclusion is one of our core values. It is vital that all of us respect ourselves and others so that we can ensure that everyone lives, learns, and works in a safe, welcoming environment.

Your student's college experience may include situations that are new to them and/or situations where someone may need their help. When people are faced with a situation where someone needs assistance, they often do not help because of the bystander effect. The bystander effect is a phenomenon that occurs when people do not help someone in need if others are present.

The bystander effect can happen in a variety of situations, from noticing someone in an unsafe situation to being present when someone tells an offensive joke. It is important to talk to your student about how to help others. Doing so will help empower your student to recognize situations where someone needs assistance so that your student can take action. Take a few minutes and discuss the five steps that bystanders go through before stepping up to help someone in need.

1. Notice the event. It is important to be aware of your surroundings at all times.
2. Interpret the event as a problem. If you are unsure if someone needs assistance, ask!
3. Assume personal responsibility. Do not presume that someone else will help the person in need.
4. Know how to help. If you aren't sure how to help, then find someone who does. When in doubt, call 911.
5. Implement the help and step up!

Bystander empowerment training is available for students through Health Promotion and Wellness. Visit Wellness.IllinoisState.edu for more information.



Conversation tips

Many of these topics may be new to your family or uncomfortable for you to talk about. Consider these suggestions in order to have open and respectful discussions with your student.

- Use cues to help bring up the topic of alcohol and drug use. Start a conversation by commenting on advertisements, music, shows on television, or stories in the news. Ask how your student feels about the topic and truly listen to what they say.
- Choose the appropriate time to talk with your student. The weeks and months just prior to beginning college are the best time to start these conversations.
- Listen. Give your full attention and make eye contact. Talk openly and honestly while respecting that your student is an adult. And remember, your guidance and opinions are valued.



- Discuss expectations. What do you expect of your student? What consequences will you impose if expectations are not met? What do they expect from their college experience?
- Correct misperceptions. Many students enter college anticipating rampant substance use and sexual activity based on things they've seen in the media or heard from friends. They also often think that substances can enhance their social life. Emphasize that, overall, college students are responsible when it comes to healthy decision-making. And despite what your student may believe, not everyone is doing it!
- Talk with your student about consent for any type of sexual activity. Sexual consent is a vital part of safe and equally enjoyable sexual experiences. A definition of sexual consent is available in the University's Student Code of Conduct.
- Keep the conversation going. Alcohol consumption is most prevalent and the heaviest during the first six weeks of the fall semester, on Thursday and Friday evenings, around holidays such as Halloween and St. Patrick's Day, and during the last few weeks of the spring semester.
- Get to know the campus. Illinois State University is your student's home away from home. Become familiar with the variety of opportunities open to your student and the substance-free social activities offered on a regular basis, such as the alcohol-free University Program Board events and other registered student organizations' activities. Encourage your student to find fun social outlets that do not involve alcohol.
- Encourage your student to use university resources. Many issues that college students struggle with stem from managing stressors. Health Promotion and Wellness and other university offices have a multitude of programs and resources available to help keep your student happy, healthy, and reaching their highest potential. Examples of services available include mindfulness classes, access to therapy dogs, t'ai chi, sports clubs, career services, and academic support services.

Safety and well-being

- If your student chooses to go out, encourage them to have a party plan.
 - Before your student goes to a party, make sure they have the number for a campus or community service that offers free rides home or numbers for local cab companies. This can prevent drinking and driving or walking home alone in unsafe situations.
 - Encourage your student to make arrangements before going to the party about who they will be leaving with after the party.
 - If your student chooses to drink alcohol, discuss safe strategies such as never accepting an open beverage from a stranger and limiting consumption to three drinks a night.
- Support your student's drive for success; however, be aware if your student takes on too many responsibilities or activities. While involvement is a great way to meet people and to gain priceless life experience outside the classroom, many students take on too many obligations and greatly increase their stress levels. Help your student find a balance that is right for him or her.
- Help your student develop the skills to balance academic demands and social pressure wisely. College can bring on stress that your student may not be familiar with. Be aware of how your student is handling stress. Some students can turn to alcohol and other drugs to help cope with loneliness, stress, or the need to fit in. Keep an open line of communication and access campus resources when needed.
- Let your student know that you want them to get the most out of their college experience—safely. Every student's safety and well-being are of utmost importance to all of us at Illinois State University.



Campus resources

Division of Student Affairs	StudentAffairs.IllinoisState.edu
Campus Recreation	CampusRecreation.IllinoisState.edu
Career Center	CareerCenter.IllinoisState.edu
Dean of Students Office	DeanOfStudents.IllinoisState.edu
(Dean on Duty, Diversity Advocacy, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Leadership and Community Connections, Student Activities and Involvement, Students' Attorney, Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution)	
Health Promotion and Wellness	Wellness.IllinoisState.edu
ISU Police	Police.IllinoisState.edu
Student Access and Accommodation Services	StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu
Student Affairs Title IX Office	TitleIX.IllinoisState.edu
Student Counseling Center	Counseling.IllinoisState.edu
Student Health Services	HealthServices.IllinoisState.edu
University College and Julia N. Visor Academic Center	UniversityCollege.IllinoisState.edu
University Housing Services	Housing.IllinoisState.edu

Additional resources

American College Health Association	www.acha.org
Alcohol and college drinking prevention	www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov
City of Bloomington	www.cityblm.org
College Parents of America	www.collegeparents.org
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism	www.niaaa.nih.gov
MedlinePlus prescription drug abuse	bit.ly/scriptabuse
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	www.samhsa.gov
Town of Normal	www.normal.org

Adapted from *Freshman Year: a New direction, a New Beginning*, created by the Illinois Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Other Drug and Violence Prevention.

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Your Redbird



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HEALTH PROMOTION AND WELLNESS

Illinois State University

Wellness.IllinoisState.edu

This document is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting Health Promotion and Wellness at (309) 438-WELL (9355).

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