Homesickness Prevention Strategies for Parents

1. If your student has not stayed away from home before, encourage him or her to spend some practice time away before leaving for college. This is one of the best ways a student can prepare for moving to college.

2. Assure your student that you are willing to offer your support. Even though you may assume that your student already knows this, it’s important for him or her to hear you say it.

3. Don’t send mixed messages such as “Have a great time. I don’t know what I’ll do while you’re gone,” or “I hope you’ll be okay.” Instead, express enthusiasm and optimism about the separation. If you, the parent, are feeling separation anxiety, share it with other parents, not with your student.

4. Make sure that your student knows about the college’s support system and the role of the residence life staff.

5. Discuss coping strategies with your student. Talk about how nearly everyone feels some homesickness at some point, and that there are good ways to cope with those normal feelings. Identify in advance a few things your student can do, such as talking with a residence life staffer, joining a recreation team, or getting involved with group activities in the dorm.

6. E-mail! This is a good way to stay in touch and offer your encouragement and support.

(From Student Affairs Leader, March 2007)