

## KNOWING WHEN TO STEP BACK

# Are You a Helicopter Parent?

With the assistance of its Parent Council, Dickinson College developed this short quiz to help parents figure out when they're being attentive and when they're taking it too far. Do you hover? Here's how you can tell:

**1** How often do you communicate with your student via phone or e-mail?

- a. Once a week
- b. Two or three times a week
- c. Once a day
- d. Six times a day, maybe more. You lose track.

It's natural to want to talk to your student. But usually it's better to let him or her initiate the contact; it helps teach self-reliance.

**2** How many professors have you contacted on your student's behalf?

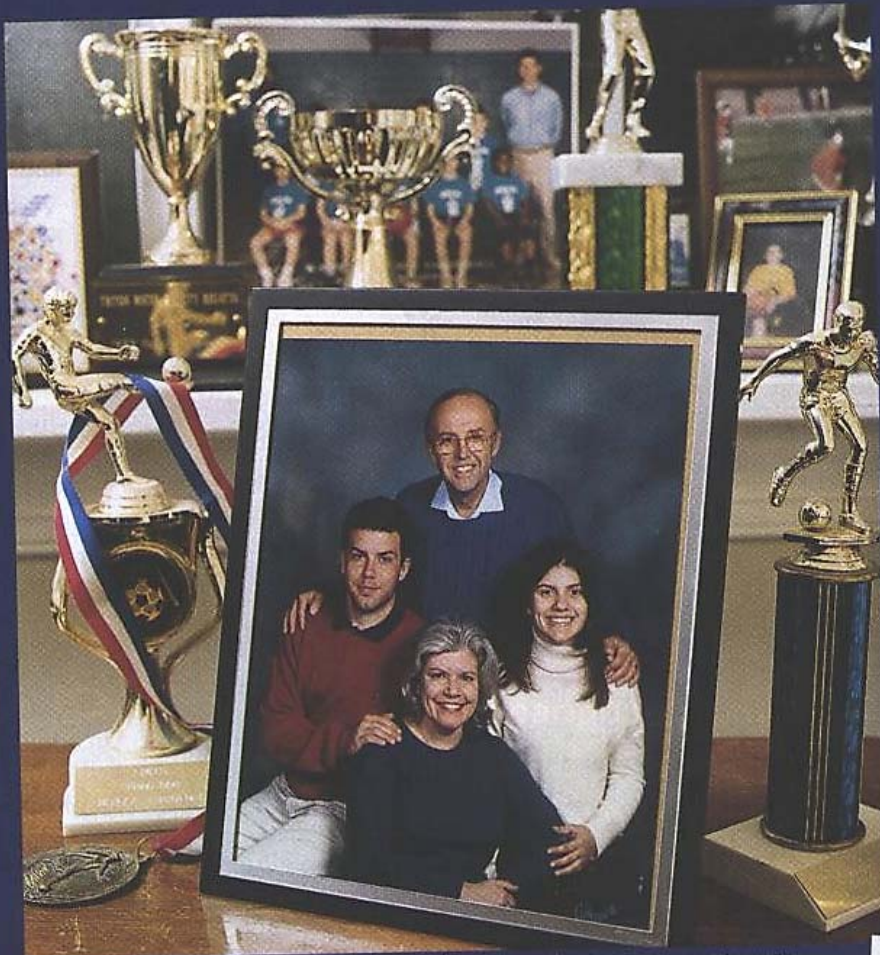
- a. None
- b. One or two
- c. Not sure, maybe five
- d. All of them

We understand that you want to fix any problems your student has. Contacting a professor, however, is never appropriate.

**3** Your student feels he isn't getting enough playing time on an athletic team. What do you do?

- a. Pat your student on the back for hanging in there, attend games when you can and cheer like crazy
- b. Tell your student to talk to the coach
- c. You e-mail the coach
- d. You call the college president and remind him who's paying the bill

Problems arise. The best results come from your student's initiative in solving them. It's time to end the "sideline coaching."



**FAMILY PHOTO:** Allen Chauvenet, with Nicholas, Christina and wife Julia

**4** Your student is having trouble writing a paper. What do you do?

- a. You listen. You sympathize.
- b. Suggest your student make appointments with the professor and the Writing Center
- c. Read what's been written so far and give suggestions
- d. Get a copy of his or her assignment and write the whole thing

Assignments and papers are opportunities for students to learn. All work must be in the student's own words—sorry, there's no leeway on this one.

**5** When visiting your student, how much do you help?

- a. You don't clean his or her room. It's not your job.
- b. You help take out the trash

- c. After taking out the trash, you do the laundry
- d. You provide maid services and leave mints on the pillow

Your instincts may tell you to clean up, but that won't teach your student to behave as an adult.

**6** Your student hates his or her roommate. What do you do?

- a. Remind your student of other times he has successfully solved problems
- b. Have him talk to the RA
- c. Storm the Office of Residence Life. You want to know what on earth is being done about this.
- d. Call the roommate's parents and let them have it

Learning to deal with different personalities is a skill needed in adult life. If problems persist, the RA has been trained to help.

**7** Your kid is responsible for a minor conduct violation. What do you do?

- a. You take an aspirin and discuss the consequences of inappropriate behavior
- b. Show up on your student's doorstep
- c. Call the president. You pay a lot of tuition—your kid should be let off the hook.
- d. Call Alan Dershowitz and print up FREE JENNY T shirts

Students are made fully aware of the consequences of conduct violations, and behaving responsibly is an integral part of growing up.

**SCORE:** Your answers are your grades

**All A's:** You're on the Distinguished Honor Roll. Great job!

**Mostly A's:** You're on the Honor Roll. Keep up the good work.

**Mostly B's:** You're doing well.

**Mostly C's:** It may be time to rethink your college habits. Reread the tips after each question, and maybe you'll reach the Honor Roll next semester.

**Mostly D's:** We know you mean well, but you've just learned that hovering can be detrimental to your student.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

[WWW.DICKINSON.EDU/PARENT/GUIDE/GUIDE2.HTML](http://WWW.DICKINSON.EDU/PARENT/GUIDE/GUIDE2.HTML);  
"LETTING GO: A PARENTS' GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE COLLEGE YEARS," BY KAREN LEVIN COBURN AND MADGE LAWRENCE TREGGER;  
"DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO, JUST SEND MONEY," BY HELEN E. JOHNSON AND CHRISTINE SCHELHAS-MILLER

Take the complete, interactive version of the quiz at [xtra.newsweek.com](http://xtra.newsweek.com) on MSNBC