

Parenting College Students in the Smartphone Age



96% of people 18-29 in the US own a smartphone (Pew Research Center, 2019).

"I feel like my parents can be overbearing."

24.05% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with this statement

Feeling like parents were overbearing was significantly associated with feeling like parents were closely monitoring students at school, and parents requiring students to allow them access to their social media accounts.

Overbearing parents can leave students feeling "helicopter parented" which can result in all sorts of negative impacts on the relationship and the student, such as



Difficulty adjusting and symptoms of depression (Darlow et al 2017)



Lower quality parent-child communication (Segrin et al 2012)

However, there is evidence that some parental impact is good during college.



Lower risk of alcohol dependence with higher parental monitoring (Kaynak et al 2013)



Parents can impact whether or not students choose to use marijuana (Napper and Hummer 2015)

So, how should I be interacting with my college student?

Talk to them! Research shows that parents still have a big impact on decision making. This research indicates that close monitoring and requiring social media interaction could leave students feeling overburdened, but not all social media interaction had this impact.

Asking about social media content and interacting on social media were not associated with feeling overburdened. Notice, these are voluntary interactions and requiring students to allow social media access is not, so maybe evaluate requirements to allow students their autonomy.
