

Learn to Parent Adults in College



Learn to Parent Adults in College

My husband and I headed back to Berkeley a year ago after EJ completed his last set of finals. We were picking him up for the last time to complete his final school semester at home. Was college already coming to an end for him? We collectively decided to complete EJ's final semester at home in Los Angeles. The move back home made the best financial sense.

When your child leaves as a senior in high school and returns as a senior in college, expectations and parenting shifts tremendously. My husband and I had to learn how to step back and reset boundaries for ourselves and our young man. Nothing could prepare us

for how much he had grown, developed, and changed in three years. It is tough to be clear about expectations without smothering my adult child. Having him home for the holidays was fantastic, but we had to make some agreements and set new rules for how we would coexist in this new young adult season.

We listened. We often talked about what was acceptable and not. There was a struggle. EJ felt we were smothering him. He did not realize how not knowing when he would be home created stress for us. The following is a list of strategies that helped us with our transition:

Weekly check-ins and keep it short, direct, and to the point. Never be afraid to have those courageous conversations about responsibilities regarding school, work, relationships, dating, and remaining focused on the goal. Enjoy school and graduate! We agreed to treat EJ at home as if he were still living in Berkeley. He was free to come and go as he needed. However, EJ needed to respect our work schedules and inform us when he was leaving the house and when he planned to return, even if he planned to return the next day. EJ left us with the phone number of one friend who was going with him in an emergency. Each conversation was an opportunity for a wellness check-in and a time to remind him that we were on Team EJ.

Utilized moments to encourage, inspire, and cheer EJ on in the final semester.

The pandemic made the last semester feel like time slowed down, almost to a stop. However, despite the

myriads of challenges during the pandemic, we finally got through the final semester of Berkeley. In May 2021, we celebrated virtually EJ's graduation from the university. We are the proud parents of a CAL grad! We are still learning how to best parent each day during this young adult season. We are making it work as a team because we take each day one moment at a time. We're proud of EJ. He is a great human being and is still becoming. We stand ready to support him in this new role and look forward to his next!